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CYCLE GUIDE

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Suspension Buyer's Guide

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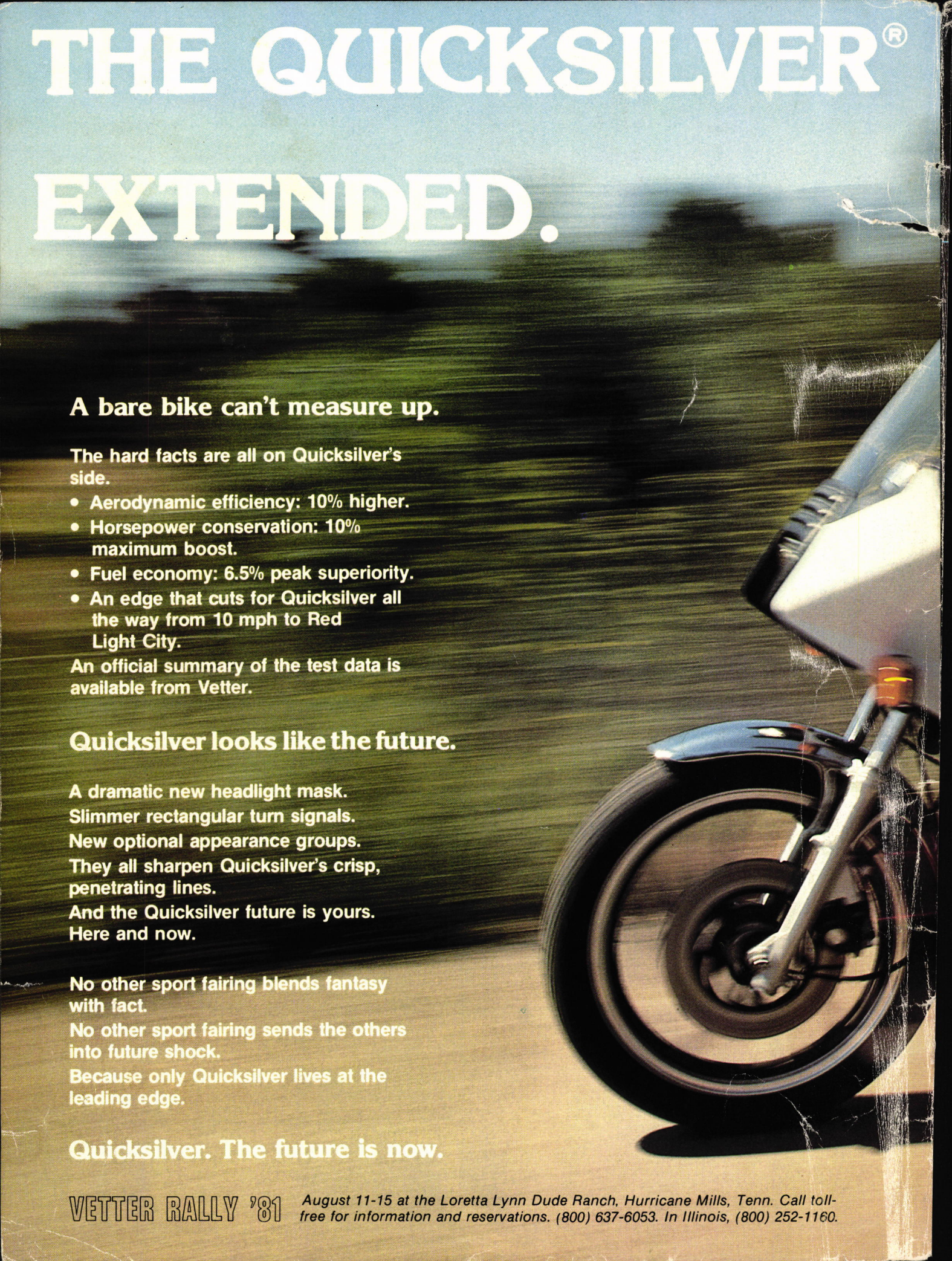

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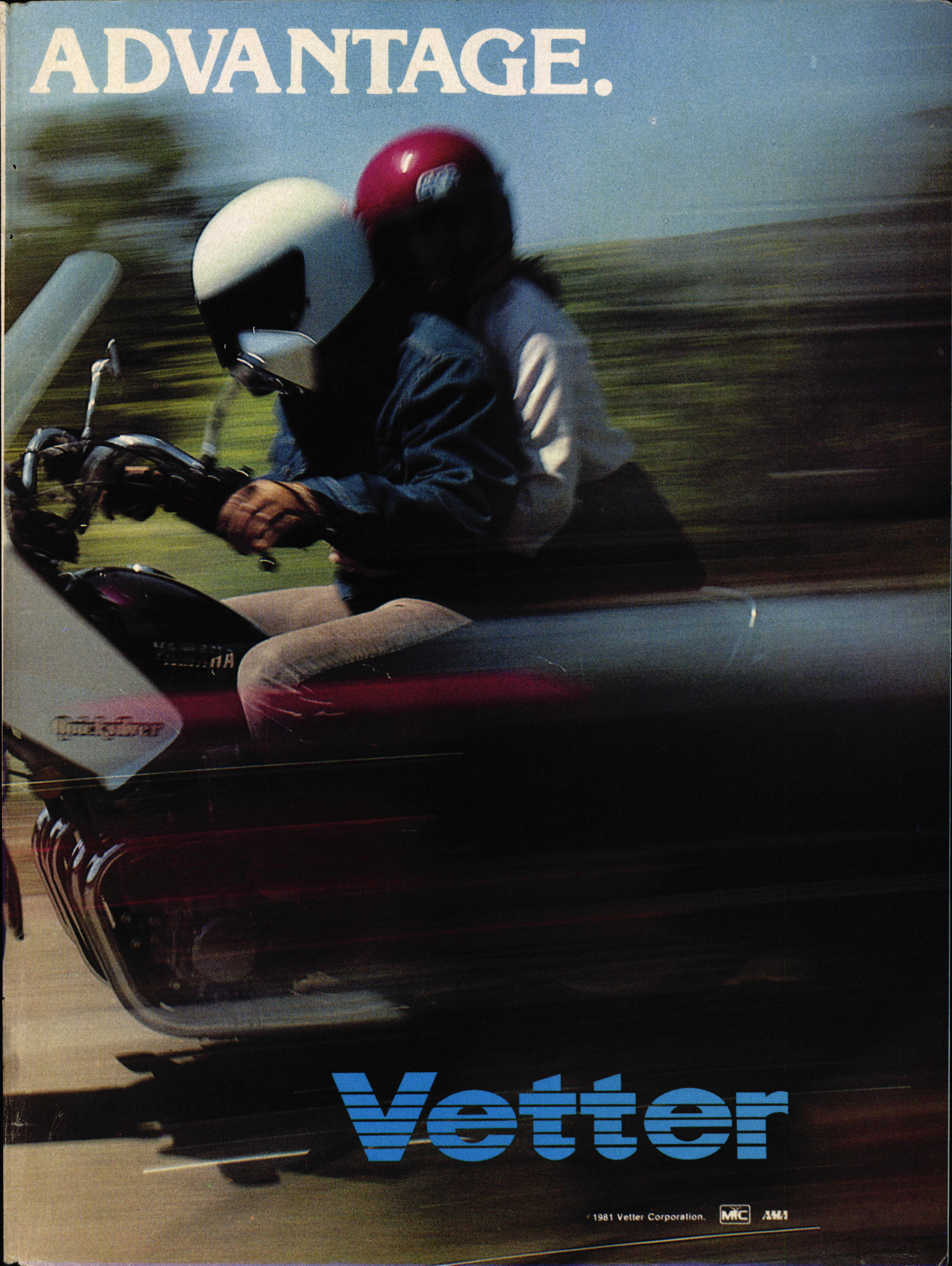

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QUOTE:
"We'll run even up with any company from any country in the world. But not on fixed rules, which is what we have for '82. That's selling the country down the river—and we've been sold, damn it!"
—Pg. 58

ON THE COVER:
CBX and R100RS, the two finest sport tourers that lots of money can buy, pose for Baron Wolman's Nikon in the world's most elaborate photo studio.

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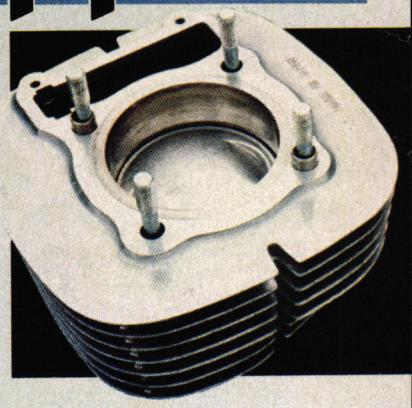
One barrel of fun.



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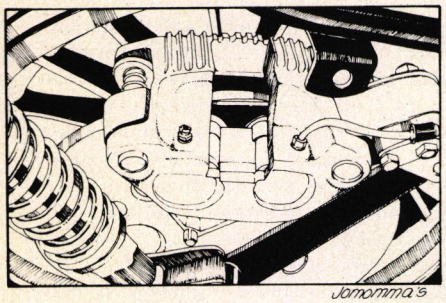

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OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS	HORSEPOWER @ RPM*		GEARS
Can-Am 250 MX-5	Jan. '79	Two-str.	10.8/10.0	218	32.1	8500	5
Can-Am 250 Qualifier III	Feb. '80	Two-str.	9.7/9.8	230	25.2	8000	6
Cam-Am 400 MX-6	June '80	Two-str.	11.5/10.8	233	38.3	6500	5
Honda CR125R	April '81	Two-str.	10.6/11.5	213	NA	NA	6
Honda CR250R	May '80	Two-str.	11.8/11.0	222	27.5	7000	5
Honda CR450R	Feb. '81	Two-str.	11.0/12.5	236	NA	NA	4
Honda XL185	March '79	Four-str.	7.4/6.75	239	11.2	7500	5
Honda XR185	March '79	Four-str.	8.0/7.75	221	12.8	10000	6
Honda XR500	May '79	Four-str.	8.5/8.6	273	25.8	6500	5
Husqvarna 125CR-'80	Nov. '79	Two-str.	11.8/11.8	214	18.8	11000	6
Husqvarna 250WR	Aug. '79	Two-str.	9.5/9.5	238	21.9	6500	6
Husqvarna 420AXC	Oct. '80	Two-str.	11.5/11.9	239	NA	NA	4
Husqvarna 430CR	March '81	two-str.	11.9/11.3	239	33.3	6500	6
Kawasaki KLX250	Sept. '79	Four-str.	9.8/10.5	239	15.2	8500	5
Kawasaki KDX175	Dec. '80	Two-str.	9.6/9.8	222	15.3	8500	6
Kawasaki KX125 A7	Jan. '81	Two-str.	10.4/11.3	207	20.9	12000	6
Kawasaki KX250	Sept. '80	Two-str.	11.3/11.2	233	26.8	8000	5
Kawasaki KX420	July '80	Two-str.	11.0/11.3	250	34.0	7000	5
Maico 400 MI	April '80	Two-str.	12.3/12.0	233	35.5	7000	5
Maico 450 MI	April '80	Two-str.	12.3/12.0	236	37.0	7000	5
Montesa Cappra 414 VE	Oct. '79	Two-str.	10.9/10.7	236	28.5	6500	4
Suzuki PE400	Nov. '80	Two-str.	11.3/11.3	250	30.9	7000	5
Suzuki RM125T	Dec. '79	Two-str.	11.2/11.7	200	19.8	10500	6
Suzuki RM250N	May '79	Two-str.	11.2/11.8	218	27.1	8000	5
Suzuki RM400N	Sept. '79	Two-str.	11.2/11.8	229	28.1	7500	5
Yamaha Pro-Tec 600	Nov. '79	Four-str.	10.5/10.1	262	46.2	6500	5
Yamaha IT250G	Dec. '79	Two-str.	9.8/9.8	244	27.7	8000	6
Yamaha TT250G	Aug. '80	Four-str.	8.8/7.5	242	17.7	8000	5
Yamaha YZ250G	March '80	Two-str.	11.2/11.6	217	29.6	8000	6
Yamaha YZ465G	July '80	Two-str.	11.2/11.8	228	39.4	7000	5

*Horsepower shown is taken at the rear wheel and does not account for transmission losses between the engine and rear wheel. These results may differ from manufacturer's claims or from results obtained using a different dynamometer.

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R65	March '81	2C/G	14.16/92.1	110	423	45-50	133
BMW R100T (Dressed)	Aug. '79	2C/G	13.81/92.9	119	521	38-53	142
Ducati Darmah	Sept. '78	90-deg. 2D/F	13.41/97.5	118	487	25-40	120
Dunstall-Suzuki GS1000 CS	July '79	4A/F	11.32/117.0	154	488	37-.5	124
H-D CLE Sidecar	Sept. '79	45-deg. 2D/F	17.60/69.3	91	1036	25-35	181
H-D Tour Glide	Sept. '80	45-deg. 2D/F	15.58/83.9	108	785	35-44	161
Honda CB400T Hawk	March '80	2A/F	14.37/88.6	100	391	51-65	139
Honda CX500 Custom	Aug. '79	80-deg. 2E/G	14.12/92.9	102	468	44-51	146
Honda CB650	Feb. '79	4A/F	13.29/99.9	113	447	37-51	131
Honda CB650 Custom	Dec. '79	4A/F	13.10/99.8	113	447	44-52	131
Honda CB750F	Oct. '79	4A/F	12.41/106.8	128	524	31-52	135
Honda CB750C	Nov. '80	4A/F	12.68/105.3	128	530	39-46	131
Honda CB900C	June '80	4A/G	12.44/107.9	132	588	37-44	155
Honda Interstate	March '80	4C/G	13.40/96.0	121	718	33-45	146
Honda CBX	Dec. '79	6A/F	11.86/114.5	130	555	19-36	145
Kawasaki KZ440D	Feb. '81	2A/F	14.59/89.1	107	383	56-64	135
Kawasaki KZ550	Sept. '80	4A/F	13.45/97.1	103	426	37-51	150
Kawasaki KZ750	May '80	4A/F	12.50/107.8	127	471	39-50	134
Kawasaki KZ1000J	Feb. '81	4A/F	11.62/116.3	130	521	30-51	135
Kawasaki KZ1300	April '81	4A/F	11.62/117.6	140	559	38-44	NA
Kawasaki Z1-R	April '80	4A/F	12.24/110.6	130	552	35-48	131
Kawasaki KZ1300A GT	Sept. '80	6A/G	12.71/107.4	135	730	31-45	146
Laverda 1200 Jota	Dec. '78	3A/F	12.54/105.0	121	518	29-37	145
R.C. Turbo CB750F	Oct. '80	4A/F	11.99/113.8	NA	523	27-39	135
Suzuki GS450 ST	May '80	2A/F	14.09/92.5	100	397	55-57	127
Suzuki GS750ET	July '80	4A/F	12.62/105.5	122	523	39-55	130
Suzuki GS1000E	Aug. '80	4A/F	11.98/113.9	136	528	32-50	137
Suzuki GS1000G	Aug. '80	4A/G	12.34/110.8	139	564	30-51	141
Suzuki GS1100ET	April '80	4A/F	11.43/118.3	140	544	37-49	116
Triumph Bonneville Special	July '79	2A/F	13.94/96.2	110	411	45-55	175
Yamaha RD350LC	Dec. '80	Two-str. 2/AF	13.23/101.0	113	328	NA	126
Yamaha XJ650 Maxim I	June '80	4A/G	12.60/107.4	120	453	40-54	128
Yamaha XJ650	Nov. '80	4A/G	13.19/102.4	125	476	43-44	NA
Yamaha Virago	March '81	75-deg.2D/F	13.28/99.8	105	481	47-51	132
Yamaha TZ750E	April '79	Two-str. 4A/F	11.62/125.5	180	331	NA	NA
Yamaha XS850LG	Feb. '80	3A/G	13.10/101.7	116	548	42-55	144
Yamaha XS1100LH	Jan. '81	4A/G	11.99/113.5	130	562	41-46	133

*A-Transverse Vertical, B-Vertical, (single-cylinder only), C-Horizontally Opposed, D-Tandem Vee, E-Transverse Vee, /F-Chain Final Drive, /G-Shaft Final Drive, /H-Belt Final Drive

Editorial

Reading Into The Polite Fiction

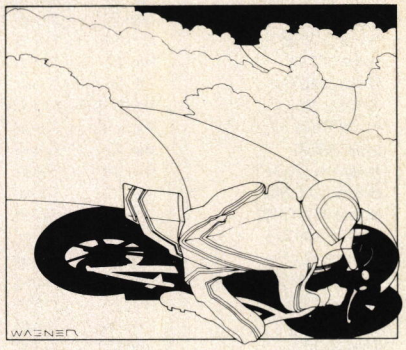
We have met the enemy, and he is us

• If you're gearing up for the next scheduled assault on motorcycling to roll down the rails, you might try prying your eyes away from the safetycrats for a moment. Not completely, you understand. Just long enough to notice that while you were busily entrenching yourself for some new onslaught of anti-motorcycle sentiment, something else more insidious rolled up from behind.

This kind of sneak attack is hard to defend against, since it is propelled by well-intentioned motorcycling advocates, not some faceless agency. Their chief weapon is what we refer to as the "polite fiction." It's the notion that it's okay for everyone on the inside of a group to know the truth, but the secret shouldn't be shared. In this case, what it means is that while we all know that motorcycles are the next best thing to having a fighter plane in your garage, the information must be guarded so that the unnamed "They" can't use the knowledge against us.

To the authors of our polite fiction, it is detrimental to the future of motorcycling for a magazine to intimate that riding an 11-second literbike is fun. They say it is damaging to the mutual cause of all riders to portray something with tires rated for 130 mph and enough engine to make them roll that fast as anything more than a fuel-efficient way to get to work. Or that while it might be justifiable to hint at some kind of exhilaration in connection with wringing the bejeezus out of a bike, the underlying premise ought to be that motorcycles are simply tools that allow you to leave your wife the station wagon when you're off doing something else. Now, since you're on the inside of this particular fiction, you recognize it as so much eyewash, but the rules say you shouldn't tell. Someone might be taking notes.

If the polite fiction were confined to giving some of the more "respectable" parts a little PR boost, who could argue? It's just easier to swallow hard and count it all as one of those investments that pays dividends later on down the road. And that's precisely how you're supposed to view it. But it doesn't stop there. It never does. Once you allow that maybe it would be all right to promote the "harmless" aspects of riding a motorcycle in trade for the promise of less restriction in days ahead, those well-intentioned types take the next step. If a little rose tint in the glasses works, they argue, why not paint the damn things red in the



first place?

These apologists for motorcycling then suggest that any mention of the performance properties of motorcycles draws would-be regulators out of the woodwork like a smudge of jam at the side of the kitchen sink. And so, to the fictionalists at least, the answer is simple: Why not just get the insiders to pretend that motorcycles are no more high-performance vehicles than Aunt Hattie's De Soto? Since seeing a motorcycle leaned over upsets all the outsiders on bench seats, just don't show bikes tilting the horizon. Brilliant. A master stroke. You don't try to change reality, just how it's depicted. And since the people who already know bikes also know that they have to lean to corner, the deception costs nothing. Best of all, the outsiders never have to be reminded that motorcycles are fundamentally different from cars.

Then, their fury fed by spasms of self-righteousness, these defenders of the true salvation go on to suggest, rather loudly at that, that it is in something less than bad taste to show street motorcycles on a racetrack. Someone honking around a track on a street bike is a dangerous image, you know. After all, the bikes were never intended for the track. Just not built for it. Designed for 60 mph, tops.

Not all proponents of this particular fiction are quite that blatant, though. Some take a more indirect means to the same end. Those elements would be nothing short of overjoyed if road tests were bereft of performance data. And failing that, they would like to decide what kind of information should be distributed to the outside world. Fuel consumption and braking distances are right up there, of course, but quarter-mile times and top speeds are not. The notion is that printing quarter-mile figures is somehow less socially acceptable than showing 0–60-mph acceleration. After all, the fictionalists argue, the quarter-mile doesn't have any relevance to the real world. You aren't allowed to go any faster than 55 mph anyway.

The odd part—or one of the odd parts—about motorcycling's polite fiction is that some of its staunchest supporters can be found within the highest corridors of the industry itself. Some, at least, are the movers and shakers who help decide how motorcycling will feel, how it will taste, in years to come. Of course, a great deal of the motivation for this fiction derives from the product-liability bugbear that has seized motorcycling by the throat and is tightening its grip. And so, the point of view of the fictionalists comes into clearer focus.

But it isn't completely fired by the worry that some kid will try to imitate what he sees, end up in a dustpan and sue the life out of Motorcycles, Inc. It might make more sense if it were. No, behind the polite fiction is the often sincere belief that if we just don't advertise the fact that motorcycles are by their nature faster, more recreational and sometimes more dangerous than other ways to get from here to there, the world won't notice. But in all of this attempt to pull the wool over the collective public eye, I see some seriously fuzzy thinking. If 0–60 mph looks better than a quarter-mile, why not 0–55? That would really show Them. Or better yet, why not 55-mph speedometers? That should just about convince a doubting world that a GS1100 Suzuki or a GPz1100 Kawasaki is nothing more than a toy.

It isn't just this possibility of carrying the absurd to its illogical conclusion that bothers me, though. It's the idea that this fiction is actually fooling anyone. Nonsense. Any battle lines were drawn years ago, and no one, down to the most granite-headed, dullest bureaucrat ever built, is for one minute set off the scent. Certainly, *you* aren't fooled. Neither are the motorcycle manufacturers. They can clearly see the value in being able to alternately reach for and avoid the mantle of high performance. The evidence for their appreciation of this fine fiction continues to roll off the assembly lines straight into the increasing numbers of waiting buyers who feed on high performance. And despite any protestations that these pavement-bucklers are built to accommodate nothing more than street-legal speeds, they will continue to be ridden the way their designers intended—right up to the limit. It's the nature of motorcycling. And it requires no fiction, polite or otherwise.

—*Larry Works*

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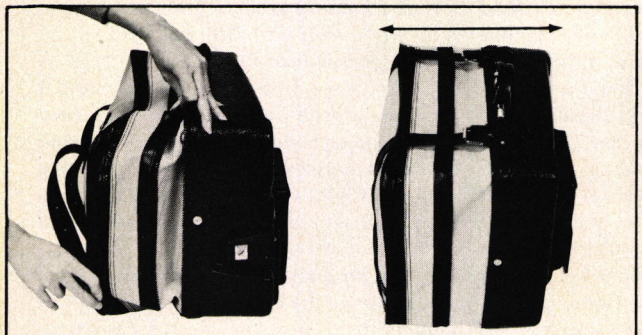

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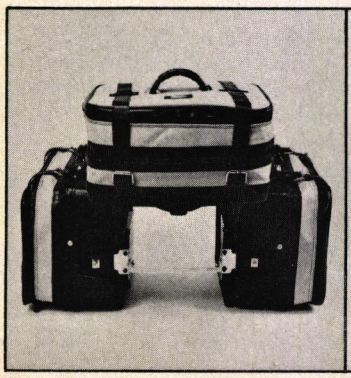

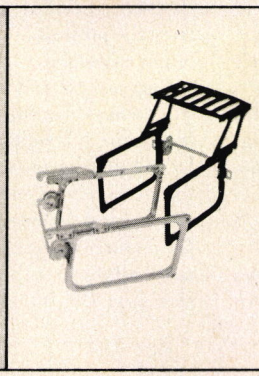

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Thompson At Large

Cheated Death Again

Riding alone no more

• "Ah ride alone, ma'am."

"Oh, Buck. You're so . . . so brave. So strong. So . . . so *manly*!"

"Yup. Me and Bullet, alone on the trail. That's the way it's gotta be, little lady."

"Oh—" sniff, sniff, "—oh, Buck! Take me *with* you!"

"Sorry, Etta. Ah'd like to. But . . . me and Bullet, y'know."

"I . . . I know, Buck. You—*you ride alone*!"

File under American Myths, Cowboy Dept., Big/Strong/Manly Section. You laugh? You're not susceptible to this particular crazy myth? Okay, then, try this:

Do you ride alone?

No, not on the street. I mean, do you ride on the dirt alone? Truck your RM250 out to the hills and shoot berms all day by yourself? Plonk up to the North 40 on your XL500S and claw up over Hardscrabble Ridge by yourself?

Ah. You *do* ride alone. Not often, maybe, and not for long each time, but there *are* days . . . after all, part of the joy of dirt is the freedom from other homo saps. Nice every once in a while to escape. That's part of what dirt bikes are for, right?

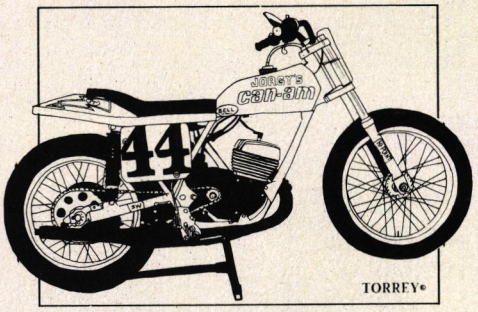
Sure. But.

But like that skin diver over there you've got some special problems that ought to nag at you before you get too far over Hardscrabble Ridge. One of those problems is this: motorcycles fall. They fall down, over, into rivers, lakes, creeks, pucker bushes, rocks, loam, rocks, ditches, holes, trenches, gullies, arroyos, rocks and ruts. And when they fall down, bizarre things happen to them. Not to mention their riders. Sometimes the bizarre thing is that the bike is demolished, historied, kaput, finished, and the rider hasn't got a scratch. And other times . . . other times the rider is the one who's got some scratches.

Ever lain on a remote hillside next to a scratched, banged, crunched, twisted and tweaked bike, semi-conscious and feeling not at all well, raise your head, look around and realize that you're *alone*?

I have. And I'm here to tell you, it won't happen again.

Funny thing was, like most semi-awful dirt riders, I went out alone because I figured I was so bad I would never get into a crunching, twisting, tweaking etc. situation in the first place. I'd take that BMW R80G/S out, gently thunka-thunka up a few hills, coast down, petrified, and amble on two wheels along some weedy cart-track. An



afternoon's fun. The big danger, I figured, was on the road getting there.

Wrong. The big danger was the big hill. Death Hill. The one that stopped the 4WD Jeep, the kids on their MX bicycles and, usually, me. But the awesome torque of the Beemer soothed me. I rode just long enough around the periphery of that big-mother hill to get confident. Too confident. The sun started sinking into the ocean nearby and I looked up at the hill and thought, Hell, why not? The Beemer was as stable as a horse, as powerful as a John Deere with twin turbos. Thunka-thunka, I'd be up for a splendid view of the sunset, and whoosh-clank, I'd be down in time for dinner. A nice end to the day's riding.

Going up, as usual, was easy. Took a little more than thunka-thunka, but it got done. I dialed up that Beemer's rheostat and it lurched up the rutted junk clay that Southern California calls dirt and all at once I was atop the off-road world's equivalent of the Empire State Building, looking down, down, down at the universe.

I drank it in and glanced down the hilly ruts. In the warm afternoon sunshine, painted gold-brown, the ruts looked almost friendly. I recalled the rock I'd bounced off of coming up. It looked tiny down there, hundreds of feet below.

The sweat started on my palms as the ruts grew less and less friendly. There was no other way off the hill. Far away, the paved road wound around this isolated little piece of SoCal. I was only a few miles from the poshest homes in California, but I might as well have been on Olympus Mons.

I gulped air and tentatively shoved the front wheel over the edge. It was a mistake. In my mind, I could hear Paul "Himalaya" Dean lecturing me about proper procedure for steep hills. Tentative didn't appear in the script. I wobbled a few feet down, and the lecture evaporated. Fear took over, just as it had the first time I tipped my hesitant skis over the icy edge of the Beginner's Slope at Boreal Ridge. Only this time, instead of a carefully groomed, gentle slope designed to help petrified first-timers, I was accelerating down the Death Ruts.

Brakes were useless. Tires slipping, butt over the luggage rack, it was no good. Still picking up speed. Finally, a thought penetrated my fogged consciousness—*stick it into the hill!* I cranked it over to the right just about the time we reached the now-too-big rock I'd seen from above. The cylinder whanged into it and then it was ground-sky-ground-sky-*dirt*.

Silence. Gritty mouth. Glued-together eyelids. Pain all over. The bike lay right next to me. The ignition lights glared at me like some angry robot's Accuser Panel. I rolled over, switched it off, thumbed the petcock closed and fell back. My helmet clanged on something hard.

I don't know how long I lay there. The pain slowly went away, but I didn't feel much like dancing. Far away, I could hear the sounds of traffic rushing by on the road. I knew I was about three-quarters of the way down Death Hill. But I just felt . . . tired. Not pained. Just tired.

After some centuries, I heard yelling. I raised my head—it took the power of three 10-megaton bombs—and there, somewhat blurred, were two guys scrambling out of a Honda Civic, waving their arms and yelling. I lifted my arm in reciprocal salute and clanged down again.

Half an hour later, the two guys and I were struggling to get the bashed Beemer on its stand. Well, they were. I was watching the whole thing from a prone position, lying against a handy tree. Still didn't feel much like the next waltz, and so they disappeared with some phone numbers and the promise to send help.

Another half an hour later, a Sheriff showed up. Then the Paramedics. Blood pressure: 110/130. Body deep-freeze cold. But reluctantly they agreed that a Merciful Universe had spared me, and then reluctantly agreed to let me wobble on home. The Sheriff stayed right behind me until we got to my street, then waved and disappeared. I tried to put the bike on its stand, but the megatons were used up. The Beemer endured one final clang against its cylinder head and I staggered off to bed.

Cheated death again, I thought as I mulled it over the next day. But the foolish grin that usually went with it was gone. And so were the days of my riding in the dirt alone.

—*Steve Thompson*

Letters

Chain of fools, Malice aforethought, McQueen

DAINGER ZONE

After reading your February issue and the report on the KZ440D I've decided that you have the most in-depth, informative and comprehensive motorcycle magazine on the market. I have only three questions: 1.) Where did you dig up Dain Gingerelli? His review of the KZ440D was one of the most closed-minded attitudes toward a motorcycle ever conceived. 2.) What does Mr. Gingerelli normally ride? If he feels that a belt belongs only on a sewing machine, then I feel a shaft belongs only on a car and a chain belongs only on a bike. So, 3.) where does this leave a motorcycle?

Lonnie Wyatt
Huntsville, Alabama

1.) Under a rock at Willow Springs Raceway. 2.) Anything with two wheels. 3.) If Dain's racing, it leaves your bike in the weeds—ed.

FULLER'S FOLLY

So it's beyond Don Fuller (*CG*, February '81 KZ440D belt-drive sidebar) why no motorcycle manufacturer has a quiet belt-drive cam, eh? Well, could someone please lead him to the nearest Honda Gold Wing (any model year will do), take off the cam BELT covers and show him not one, but two? As the owner of a '75 GL I can attest to the fact that they are quiet; and mine have required adjustment only twice in 78,000 miles. Thanks for a well-researched and informative article—with only one mistake.

Brad Gay
Hagerstown, Maryland

Yes. Ours—ed.

BULL GETS THE SHAFT

After reading the road test on the KZ440D I've begun to wonder about the intelligence of motorcycle testers. I quote: "The only thing a shaft has over a chain . . . is lifespan." I can list three more real good ones: a shaft never needs adjusting; a shaft never needs alignment; a shaft's drum brake never needs disconnecting. There's more, though. What about the "shaft" you get when you go to the dealer to get your worn-out belt replaced? What about the "shaft" you get when your belt breaks in the middle of nowhere?

I quote again: "There's no valid argument against belt drive. For any motorcycle." That's pure BS. Let's see Fuller design a belt for a Guzzi, BMW, Gold Wing or CX500. I vote Fuller for a St. Joan award—maybe he can belt the Backward Bike. It would be so nice if we didn't have to read all the BS in motorcycle magazines anymore.

Mike Rocus
Ft. Meyer, Virginia

Or the same in the Letters column—ed.

I saw an XJ650 parked in front of the *Motorrad* office building and thought it looked cheap and ugly. Sorry, personal taste. However, I fully agree that it probably functions beautifully and that the U.S. needs it and more bikes like it, including the new RD350.

Unfortunately, the RD uses Teflon swingarm bushings, and I shy from the XJ650 because it requires shims for valve adjustment. Do you often ponder, as I do, how close some motorcycles come to being excellent but always seem to lack one or two critical requirements? Personal requirements, of course. If only the pegs on my Ducati 900GTS were as far back as the Darmah's. If only the RD had bronze bushings. If only . . .

Eric B. Nye
Stuttgart, West Germany

. . . TZ750's had wings—ed.

LICENSE LOOPHOLE

Michael Jordan missed one topic in his editorial on the price/cost of motorcycling (*CG, March '81*)—motorcycle licensing. The cost may seem small, but I feel it is something that needs to be looked at. I live in a winter state where we ride an average of only five to six months per year, if the winter is kind to us. Yet I pay only three dollars less for my Harley Sportster license than for my Mercury Monterey and Montego combined! While I can't speak for every winter state, I feel at least in Wyoming this inequity should be looked into and resolved. The manufacturers and dealers should somehow help support a change.

Douglas D. Smith
Cheyenne, Wyoming

Hear, hear—ed.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE BOTSWANA?

After seeing your test of the RD350LC, I can't help but wonder why the instruments appear as though they might belong on a street-legal U.S. model. Is there another country which mandates speedometer readings in five mph increments with indicator lights (oil, high beam, etc.) in English?

Kevin H. Park
Malibu, California

England, for one—ed.

McQUEEN

In reference to Ted West's February '81 editorial column on the tragic demise of Steve McQueen, I'm compelled to say "hurrah." I, too, remember the tight-lipped squint of contemplation as McQueen peered down into his tank and then up at the mountains of Switzerland. It was obvious to the knowledgeable biker that Steve McQueen was a real motorcycle guy. We shall mourn the passing of one of our own: a friend, a brother, a man.

Gordon Stenger
Houston, Texas

DUCKING FLAK AND SHOOTING BACK

I missed the article on the XJ650, but I haven't missed the flak the Maxim has been taking. I have a new Maxim with a Quicksilver fairing and a K-G rack and backrest. My wife and I ride 200 to 500 miles every weekend and we like the bike as well as any we have owned. It's a bit short for my 6′4″ frame, and the seat could be softer, but riding two-up I don't notice it. All in all, it stacks up pretty well for a 650. It gets my vote for the bike of 1980.

Garry F. Euler
North Vernon, Indiana

Bet you voted for Carter, too—ed.

EURO OUTRAGE

To all you people who lust and scream and rave about how you would sell your mother for an XJ650, RD350LC, CB900F, etc.—*shove it!* I'm fed up with the geeks who bellow for these bikes when most of them couldn't scrape the floorboards of an Electra Glide. Look around, people! There are loads of excellent bikes right here that perform beyond what most of you wimps are capable of. Do you really want a pint-sized roadracer with a 2-rpm powerband and romper-room styling, not to mention a megabuck price tag? You know, you can tune just about any existing bike to whatever type riding you need a fix of. These bikes are at your dealer now, not 5000 miles away. Now that I've finally said my share to all you Euro-geeks, I can crouch behind my FM-2 and go gunning for disillusioned Eurobikers with my standard Suzuki GS.

J.J. Richter
Queens, New York

DRIVEN TO SHRINK

What the hell are you guys trying to do, drive me crazy? If so, it's working. First you tease me with the XJ650 Euro. Then you taunt me with the RD350 Euro. And *then* you tear my heart out with the CX500 Turbo. That's inhumane—but I love it. I don't know what you can come up with next, but if it's anything like the first three I'll probably have to be picked up by the guys in the white suits and padded truck.

Greg Bersie
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Check upcoming issues for a padded shaft-drive turbo Trimoto with a mônocoque Porsche-Design body—ed.

TURBO BATTLESTAR

I am a thirteen-year-old girl. I saw your January 1981 issue with the Honda CX500 Turbo on the cover. I wonder if Honda got their idea from the show "Battlestar Galactica," or even if Honda asked them to help design their motorcycle. My dad assumes the CX500 will probably fly, too.

Rene Boothe
The Dalles, Oregon

Only with a Wookie at the helm—ed. ●

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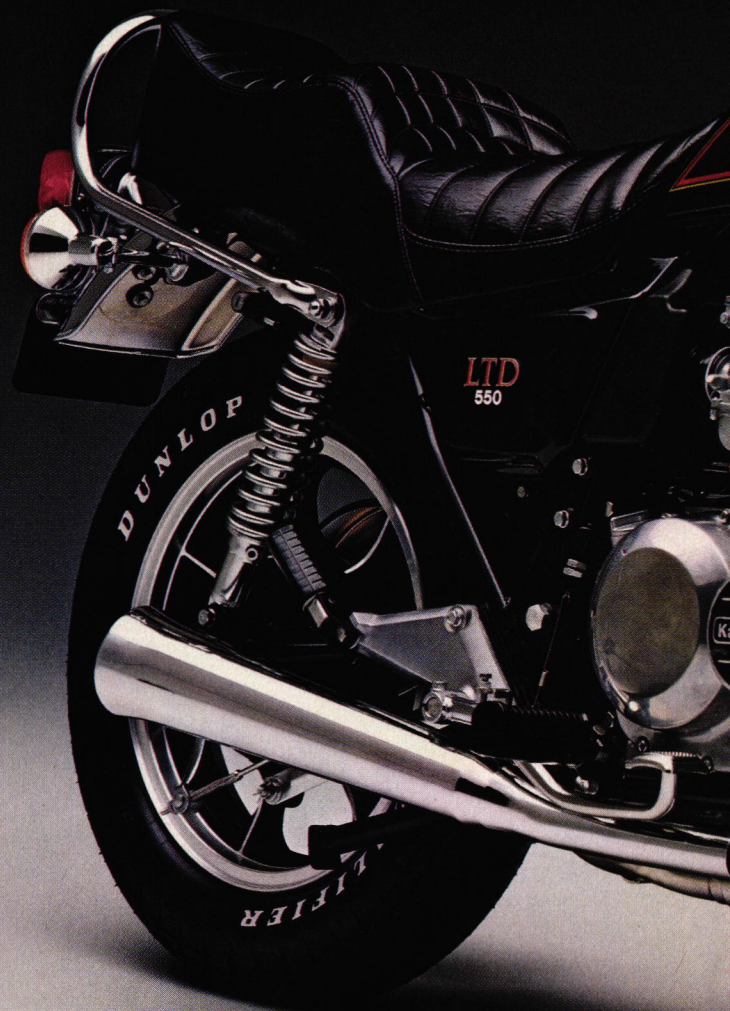

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West's Side

Seeing A Ghost

A half-dozen ways to reach a dead end

• It was chained to a No Parking sign on 86th Street. Like a dangerous wild animal.

There wasn't a straight edge left on it. Its mufflers had long, jagged striations in them that ran upward at a rakish angle on the left muffler cone, parallel to the cord on the right muffler cone. On both sides of the frame were threaded stub-ends where the pegs had been. The rear corner of the saddle cover was ripped and hung down like a tattered battle flag. The purple tank had a deep dent on the top left. On the right rear of the tank was another dent, not as big around, but much deeper, almost a puncture. The chrome front fender was crinkled on both sides and folded to a pointed Vee like the leading edge of a paper airplane.

It took a minute's careful inspection of this mauled and enchained KZ400 to discern all of the fine details. What had originally attracted me, though, was the bike's handlebar. The bar wasn't there at all, really. And seeing a motorcycle with no handlebar is like seeing a shaved cat—you take another look.

So I stopped immediately amidst the passing New Yorkers on 86th Street. What I saw was a motorcycle with both sides of the bar broken clean off at the triple-clamp, streaming back over the tank like long hair in the breeze. On a woman, it looks great. On a motorcycle, it's terrifying.

It's terrifying, of course, because you know right away that the force sufficient to break off a motorcycle handlebar at the clamp is more than sufficient to break off a helmet at the clamp. Furthermore, this bike had crashed so heavily that it not only broke off the bar on *one* side, but went right on over and broke off the bar on the *other* side. My God, I thought, my fascination growing morbid, *what had happened*!

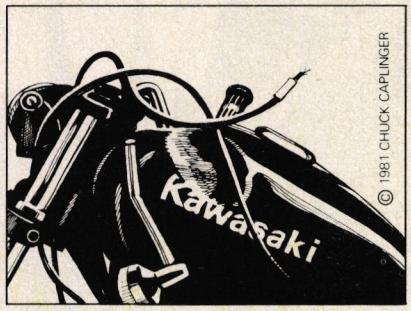
I walked round and round the bike, as if contemplating metal sculpture. I tried hard to contain this feeling of eerie fascination. But wait a second, lots of things could've happened—harmless things, innocent things, funny things. I walked around it some more.

On the tank I saw one of those unfunny stickers that says something like, "You likea you life, you keepa you hands off."

A clue. The owner was a mouth-breather. Liked martial arts movies. Put ketchup on his eggs.

On the saddle was a small, sleazy upholstered sissy-bar—now badly bent.

Another clue. The owner's girlfriend was probably a mouth-breather, too. They went



to martial arts movies together on dates. Between them, lots of ketchup was consumed at breakfast.

Useful information. It meant, for instance, that the owner was likely not a priest, and therefore, this KZ400 had likely not been dropped straight from Heaven for his exclusive use. A shame, really. A long, nasty drop like that would explain the bike's present appearance nicely.

But this idle speculation was getting me nowhere. None of it answered the one important question—*what had happened*?

Best to deal first with the obvious, then. The obvious was that the bike had impacted on both sides with tremendous force, enough force to bend the bar back like a pair of rabbit ears. Now, force of that kind requires velocity, mass, impact—what Carl Sagan, grinning like Bugs Bunny, would call, "a reeeeally *masss*-sssive re*leasssse* of kinetic energy."

This massive energy release could be accomplished in several ways: at low velocity with great mass; at high velocity with less mass; at medium velocity with medium mass on a particularly nasty banana peel. (Not getting too technical, I hope.) In the absence of solid information about the incident, though, it was left to me to explain the bike's destruction any way I could. Which I promptly began doing. Try this:

The mouth-breather hadn't made a payment in seven months, so the KZ was being repo-ed. It had been strapped down on a flat-bed truck and halfway across town on 86th Street a taxi swerved in front of the truck. The guy hit the brakes, the tiedowns came loose. The KZ400 sailed off the flatbed and bounced a few times. It was temporarily chained to the No Parking sign while the guy hunted for someone back at the yard who knew how to work motorcycle tiedowns. But nobody'd been hurt. Or. . . .

The KZ had been parked on 86th Street when the same cab swerved. But a Cadillac limo swerved to the curb to avoid the cab, hit the parked bike hard and made it bounce a few times. Nobody hurt. Limo's insurance company buying the mouth-breather a nice new KZ400. Or perhaps. . . .

The KZ was out of gas and the mouth-breather was pushing it along 86th Street when all of the above happened, but he saw it coming and stepped out of the way. Nobody hurt, insurance company buying new KZ400, mouth-breather getting free ride home in limo. Maybe. . . .

The mouth-breather lives way Upstate. Say, Elmira. The KZ400 was stolen weeks ago and the thief is riding it along 86th Street when that same cab swerves. It clips the bike. The bike lands hard, bounces a few times, is hit by an oncoming cement truck. The thief is dazed, but unhurt. In Elmira, the mouth-breather's insurance company replaces the stolen KZ. In New York City, the thief is busted and justice takes its bumpy course. How about. . . .

The mouth-breather himself is riding along 86th Street when all of the above happens, same cab, same cement truck. However, he escapes serious injury, is lucky to be alive. And much the wiser for the experience. Or, of course. . . .

The mouth-breather himself is riding his KZ400 along 86th Street at considerable speed, weaving in and out of traffic like a worm through soft soil. The same damn no-mirrors cab swerves, the mouth-breather doesn't see it. The bike crashes into the cab and slides, rolling and bouncing, up the street to the cement truck. The mouth-breather lands hard and stays where he is on the pavement next to the cab. He isn't moving. He's lying on the ground like a heap of dirty clothes and he isn't moving. . . .

Sure, there are lots of possible explanations for the pressed-and-folded derelict chained to the No Parking sign on 86th Street. These are only six of them. The truth is, I have no idea what really happened. I never found out who the owner was, couldn't even find anyone who'd seen the incident. *Anything* could've happened.

But I've got a gut feeling worth carrying around with me the next time I'm out in traffic doing berm shots off of Pontiac bumpers. In my gut, there's only one good explanation for how that KZ400 got chained to the No Parking sign, one explanation that seems more probable, more likely, than all of the rest. It's one of the six explanations I've already mentioned. I don't have to tell you which one it is, either. *Do* I.

—Ted West

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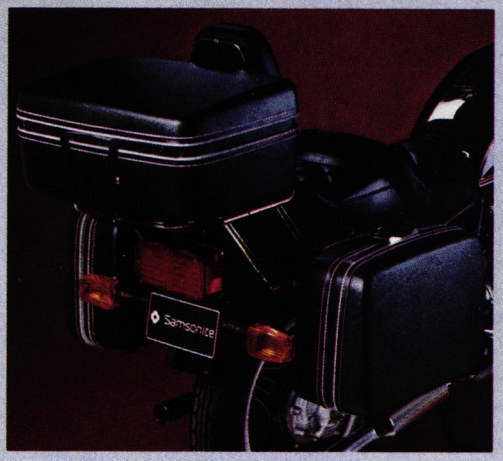

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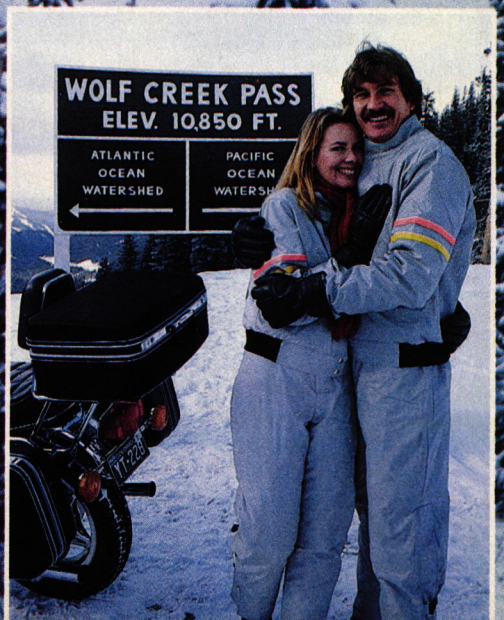

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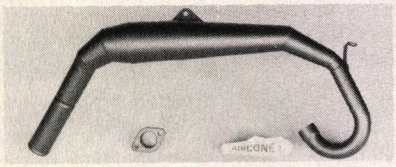

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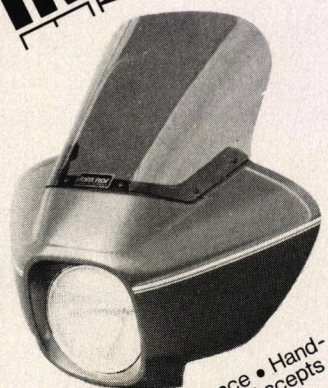

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Techspeak

Discussing A Hot Topic

Performance is a heated subject

• Ever wonder what happens to the expensive gasoline you pour into your motorcycle? It never seems to stay in the tank very long, and at nearly $1.50 per gallon you ought to know where your money is going.

If you pay attention to motorcycle ads you could be convinced that your multi-cylinder wonder motor converts every drop of gasoline into tarmac-shredding power. Or if you're swayed by the EPA you probably believe that most of that filthy gasoline is spewed out as smog.

There is some small degree of truth in both explanations, but horsepower and pollution are low on the list of things your engine produces. Indeed, only 25 percent of the potential energy in each gallon of gasoline actually goes toward driving you and your motorcycle forward. An amazing 75 percent of the energy locked in each gallon of gas does nothing more than generate heat. Much of that heat is useless to you, frying your knees and burning your fingers more than producing any benefit to your motor. In fact, if you don't get rid of some of that heat you might fry your motor, too.

It would be advantageous if we could simply do away with the heat altogether. Unfortunately, it is an inseparable part of the internal-combustion process. Your engine does not even have to be firing to get hot, since the compression of gas can raise the mixture temperature as high as 600 degrees C. But, high as that sounds, it is not enough to ignite the fuel. That job is left to the spark plug.

When the small blue spark leaps across the electrodes it is like throwing a lighted match into your gas tank. The gasoline vapors burn rapidly, almost instantly, in a great ball of flame. Inside your gas tank that rapid expansion would rip your motorcycle apart, but in the confines of the cylinder, the expansion is harnessed to push down on the piston and rotate the crank.

If this were all the gasoline did, the manufacturers' ads would be true. But as you now know, only one quarter of the energy actually spins the crank. The remaining energy raises the temperature inside the cylinder close to 2500 degrees C. That is hot enough to reduce the motor to a heap of steaming slag, but luckily much of the unwanted heat simply blows out through the exhaust pipes. Almost 35 percent of the energy in each gallon of gas is wasted this way.

But not all the heat rushes away to warm the atmosphere. The exhaust port absorbs considerable heat from the hot gases, accounting for 80 percent of the heat in the engine being concentrated in the cylinder head. Worse still, with no cooling air, much of the heat is centered at the front of the head near the exhaust, which can cause distortion unless the heat is dissipated to cooler metal or the atmosphere.

The designer's job is complicated by the fact that in an airstream the front of the cylinder is not the hottest part. The front finning actually proves coolest while the rear and side fins are progressively hotter.

Even if he could, though, the designer wouldn't want to rid the motor of all its heat. As any cold morning start will confirm, the most efficient air/fuel ratio of 14:1 does not burn well in a cold cylinder. That is why you must reduce the fuel/air ratio with a choke until the motor warms up. Some of the heat must, therefore, be retained to insure complete combustion of the fresh fuel charge.

Once warm and running, your motorcycle still has not finished wasting fuel. It has only a quarter of the energy applying force to the piston, yet before the rear wheel is turned, friction will have soaked up even more. It can take 2.5 percent of the energy in each gallon of gas just to spin an alternator. Drag in the gearbox can also account for just over 2 percent of the energy and, by the time the remaining power is fed through chains and shafts to the rear wheel, a further 2 percent can quite easily be lost.

The second worst energy waster still remains, though. After heat, aerodynamic drag uses up the most energy in every gallon of gas. Punching a bike-and-rider-size hole in the wind at a steady 50 mph can actually use up 10 percent of the available energy. And when you add in the rolling resistance of tires scrubbing against asphalt you have used almost 95 percent of the energy in each gallon just rolling your bike forward.

The remaining five percent of the potential energy is what ultimately supplies the neck-snapping acceleration the manufacturers' ads constantly tout. That is quite a way from converting every last drop into power. But what if your motorcycle engine didn't waste 95 percent of its energy to conform to earthly physics? Without the heat, friction and aerodynamic drag the internal combustion engine in your motorcycle really would be a beast. But for now the 11-second quarter-miles and 130 mph top speeds have to come from a little over 6 cents worth of every $1.50 gallon of gas.

—David Dewhurst

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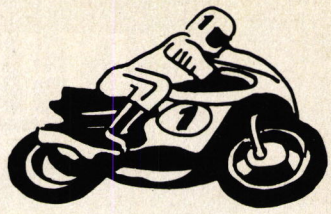

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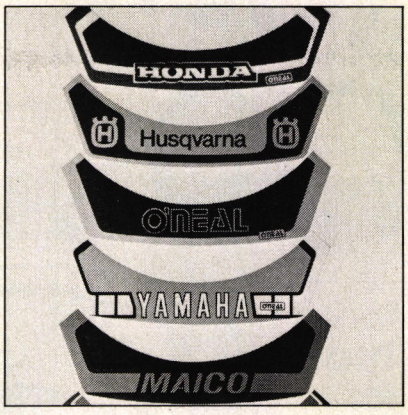
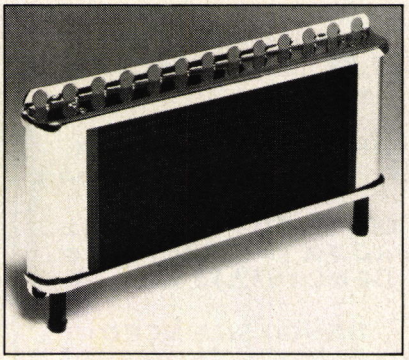
Cashing in on the new Spring crop

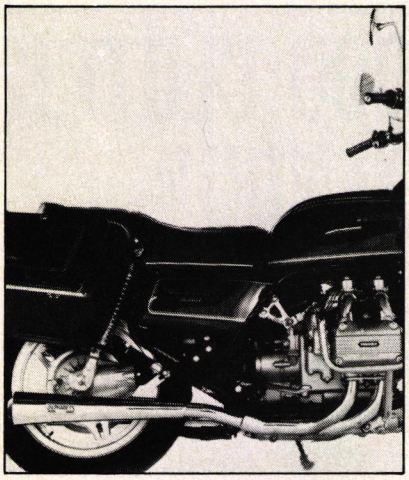
Racer's Delight: Bates Industries now offers roadracing boots to go with its famous leathers. They feature 16-inch high uppers, extra ankle padding and a shift-lever wear pad. Prices start at $90 for standard sizes in black or brown. Custom sizes, colors and striping are available. A speedway model is also offered. For information contact Bates Industries, P.O. Box 240, Dept. CG, Long Beach, California 90801.



Team Visor Decals: O'Neal Distributing has just announced their new decals for peak-style visors. It's a great way to brag about your favorite dirt bike and dress up your helmet, too. They are available for all popular brands of off-road machines. Check it out at your dealer or send $1.50 (plus 15¢ handling charge) for each one to O'Neal Distributing, 9555 Owensmouth Avenue, Chatsworth, California 91311.

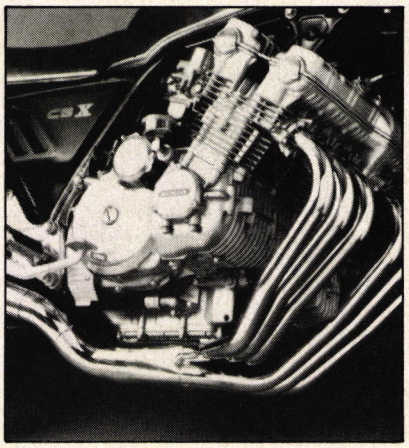
Cool Your Moving Parts: Hayden's new Mark 3TC Motorcycle Engine Oil Cooler features an integral thermostatic control valve. It provides quick warm-ups and stabilizes operating temperatures. Hayden states that each 20 degree F drop in oil temperature doubles oil life. The Mark 3TC kit is available for every major model of motorcycle. See the Mark 3TC at your local dealer or contact Hayden Incorporated, 1531 Pomona Road, P.O. Box 848, Corona, California 91720.





Head 'em Up 'n' Blow it Out: Alphabet Headers Pro-form on '78–'79 Honda GL 1000s. Because they're about half the weight of stock mufflers, the Pro-Formance Exhaust System claims a significant increase in power. These mufflers don't require carburetor jet changes and are designed to clear saddlebags. They're made from 18-gauge steel, chrome plated, and come complete with mounting hardware. You can buy a pair for $135.95 from Alphabet's Custom West Corp., 12572 Western Ave., Garden Grove, California; or phone (714) 897-3561.

The Kutting Hedge: You won't need to stand behind a hedge during the next hurricane. Just ride behind Kutter's new Special fairing. It's completely fork-mounted and weighs only about 5 pounds—less than a gallon of gasoline. Sculpted from ABS plastic, it features a recessed headlamp housing with a protective lens and a dash pocket that fits over your headlight. It is finished in either white or black Korad with pinstripe detailing. So the next time you need to get rid of some wind on the road, you may want to contact Kutter for quick relief. Just write to Howe Engineered Sales Co., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 642, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Or phone (319) 236-9606.



Star Performance: Winning Performance Products has recently discovered a new formula for protecting your CBX exhaust system. According to the manufacturer, the aluminized finish allows the engine to run cooler by creating a thermal barrier that keeps the gasses going out. Aluminizing is a process that sprays onto the header and sinks in so it is claimed to resist rust, as well. The Astro Blast Finish costs $325 retail and colors are available options. Write to Winning Performance Products, Dept. CG, 15137 Califa St., Van Nuys, California 91411. Or phone (213) 780-0754 or (800) 423-2996.

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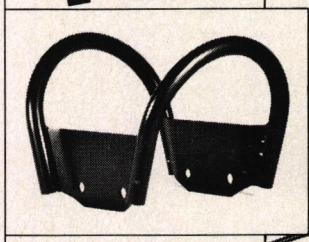

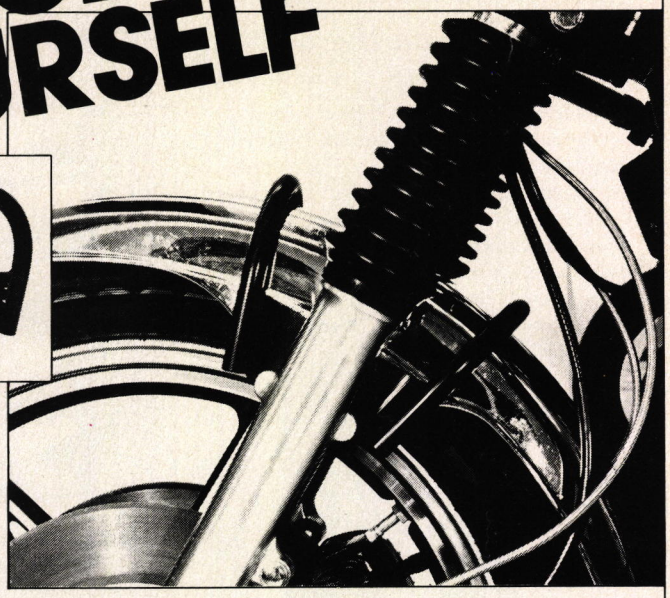

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GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY RILEY THARP

COMING SOON

• Now that the big four have shown their wares for 1981, it certainly doesn't mean that the fun is over. In fact, now's the perfect time to consider some of the more **esoteric** machines you can buy this year. One bike that fits into this category is the something old and something new **Triumph** T140ES Bonneville Executive. Even though it is based on the familiar Bonneville chassis, the addition of a fairing, travel trunk and bags made by Sigma gives the Executive a decidedly different look. The **sport-tourer** weighs a claimed 470 pounds including the new **electric starter.** That's right, you can start the 744cc mill with just the push of a button, which should increase its long-distance appeal as much as the new 4.8-gallon fuel tank. Or, for $1000 less than the $4995 list price of the Executive, you can get the electric-start engine wrapped in **traditional** Bonneville styling. Both machines share the same vertical-twin engine, this year with Bing CV carbs and a claimed 57 hp. It's refreshing to find that old motorcycles don't always die. Sometimes they just evolve.

• If the Bonneville is an **oasis** of the unusual, then so is the camel—the Moto-Morini **Camel,** that is. How about a 500cc, 302-pound, vee-twin scrambler for humping through the desert? But rather than the traditional choice of one hump or two, this Camel features a Marzocchi front fork and gas shocks, conical aluminum hubs and a six-speed transmission. The engine is derived from the half-liter street unit, but is modified for added low-end and mid-range power. The price for the moto-dromedary has yet to be revealed.

• Another new form of vee-twin bike is the new 600cc version of the Ducati **Pantah**—possibly to be called the Cheetah. This rolling **sculpture** gets its added displacement from a 4mm-larger bore. The 600 also receives a different fairing and larger front discs than the Pantah, so it's more than just a bore job.

• Here's a small-bore candidate for the Why-Can't-We-Get-Those-Over-Here department. The Italian manufacturer **Malanca** just introduced a new 125cc twin with mag wheels, triple disc brakes, **20 horsepower** and an 85-mph top speed. Think of it this way—if a literbike had proportional performance, it would be able to go **680 mph.** That should qualify the Malanca as some kind of hyperbike, small-bore or not.

• Motorcycles are not the only thing that's hot this year, because the accessory companies have been busy as well. And wouldn't you know, one such company is already marketing **twice pipes** for the Yamaha Virago. Of course, it's just coincidence that the Harley Sportster uses a similar design.

• Or, if you already have a Harley, you now have the choice of a **Continental** tire when it's time for new treads. The German tire maker just announced a **16-inch** addition to its line.

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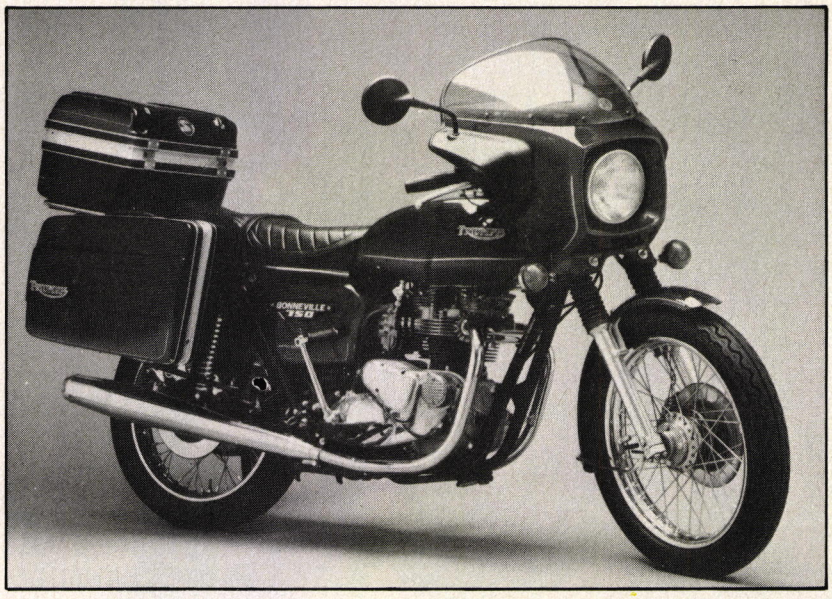
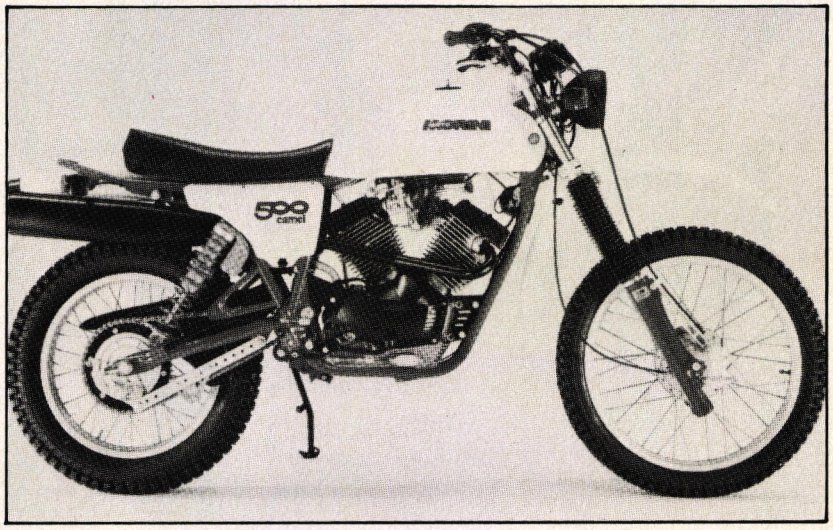


Triumph's new Bonneville Executive features sport-touring gear and electric start

22 years in the same business brings a promotion to Executive.



Moto-Morini unleashes the Camel—a 500cc, 302-pound boondocker

With a thirst for fun, and better than a spit in the eye.

The class of its class.

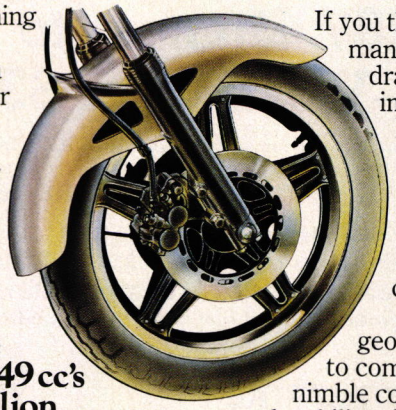
The 750 cc high-performance class is no slouch when it comes to competition.

So it may come as a surprise when you stop to think that it has been dominated for over two years by one motorcycle. The Honda CB750F.

But while everyone else has been playing catch up, trying to match the performance of the CB750F, Honda has not been resting on the machine's laurels.

So when you see the ever increasing flood of claims that one bike or another is a match for the CB750F, Honda would like you to keep one thing firmly in mind.

The 1981 Honda CB750F is even better than ever.



Both the dual front and single rear disc brakes feature Honda's new twin piston calipers.

Four-cylinders, 16 valves, double overhead cams, 749 cc's and maybe a million high-performance miles.

The CB750F engine is not the newest design in its class – merely the most advanced. It features the Honda Pentroof™ combustion chamber design for central spark plug placement and high combustion efficiency. Four valves per cylinder enhance clean burning of fuel and efficient exhaust. And the direct valve system, because it is lighter than a rocker arm system, allows higher engine rpm's and minimizes valve float. And of course, less weight is always a consideration on a high-performance machine.

The double overhead cams are driven by dual multiplate chains, which are both strong and long-wearing.

Carburetion is by four 30 mm constant velocity units with an accelerator pump for quick, crisp throttle response. Transistorized pointless ignition delivers a reliable, hot spark throughout the engine's performance range. And never needs adjustment or other maintenance.

The exhaust system is a highly efficient four-into-two.

This is the engine that is the basis for Team Honda's Superbike road racers. The engine that has propelled the CB750F to its rightful place as king of the 750 class performance machines. It is a proven performer.

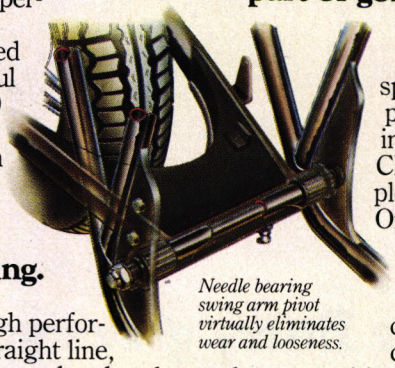
Some new twists on handling.

If you think high performance is straight line, dragstrip speed and nothing else, read no further. Because to the CB750F, high performance means the quickest way to get from point A to point B, regardless of how many curves are in between.

Start with frame geometry, designed to combine quick, nimble cornering and high-speed stability. Add new 37 mm air adjustable front forks. With an equalizer to facilitate filling.

A needle bearing swing arm pivot provides precise alignment, vitally important to proper handling. And the new Honda VHD™ shocks are adjustable 30 ways to match load, road and riding conditions. The highlighted black ComStar™ wheels are mounted with wider than ever tubeless tires for a bigger footprint on the road.

A crucial part of going-stopping.



Needle bearing swing arm pivot virtually eliminates wear and looseness.

High performance sport riding requires precise, effective braking. The Honda CB750F utilizes a triple disc brake system. One slotted disc in the rear, two slotted discs in front. All with twin piston calipers, for added caliper rigidity and more positive feel.

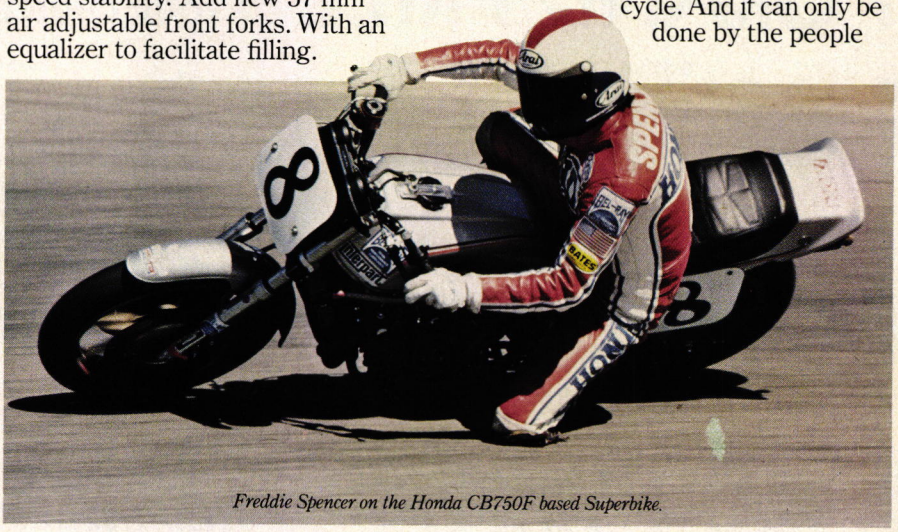
One thing no company can build into a bike. A reputation.

No motorcycle rolls off the assembly line a proven winner. Most simply roll on into oblivion.

It takes years to build a reputation as a high performance motorcycle. And it can only be done by the people who know and ride and talk about this kind of motorcycle.

If you know one of these people, see what he has to say about the Honda CB750F.

If you are one of these people, you already know.



Freddie Spencer on the Honda CB750F based Superbike.

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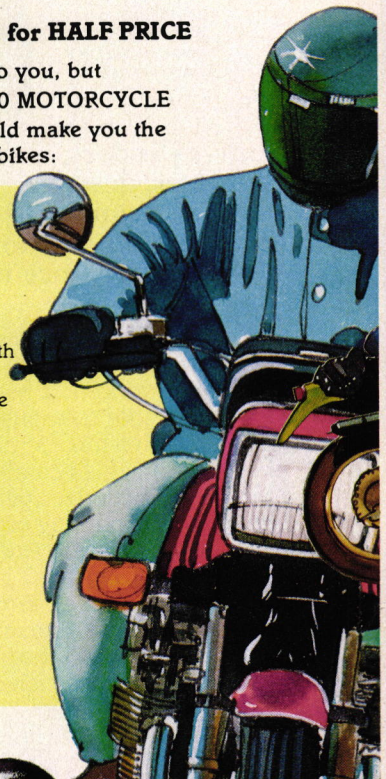

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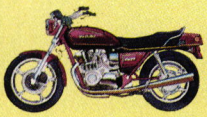

SUZUKI GS1000G
A tidy shaft drive with remarkable Suzuki performance and the most nimble handling of the big Fours.

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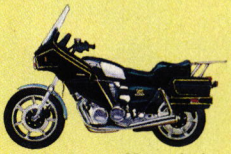
High performance touring at its best; shaft simplicity and less weight for a smoother, better handling ride while delivering more power than ever.



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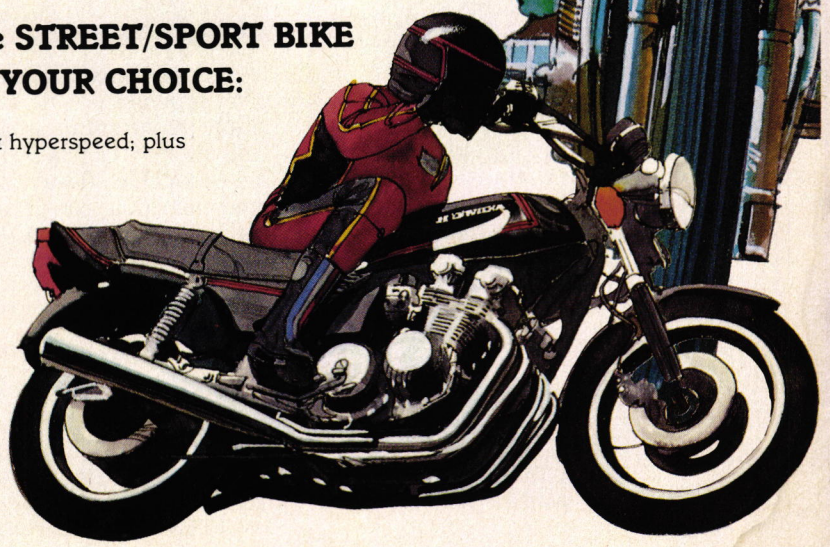

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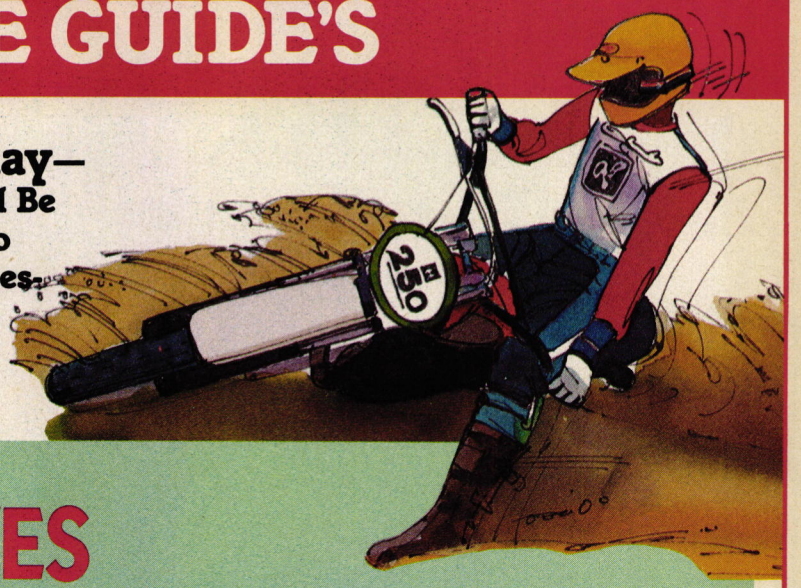

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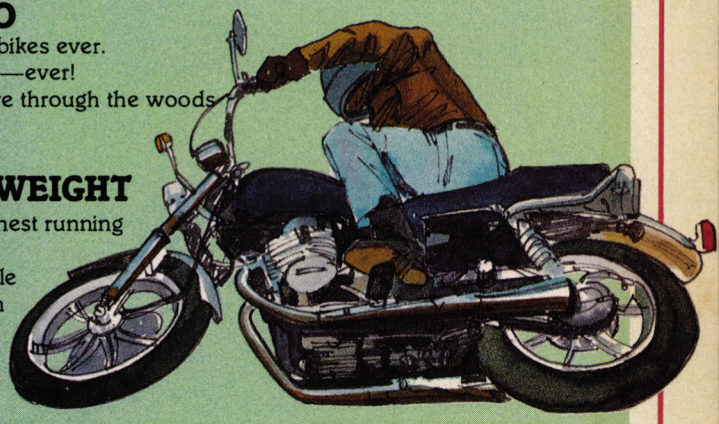

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Two R65 Extra Margins for 1981: More power, new front brakes. This year's BMW R65, above left, is actually ten percent more powerful than last year's. It has also added double front disc brakes for smoother stopping power.

Yet it retains its singular advantages of low weight, easy maneuverability. Plus a 6.2 gallon tank for the longest range in its category.

The newest big BMW and its virtues. The new BMW R100, above right, offers an almost limitless opportunity to customize to your own particular riding tastes with a whole range of factory-designed, and tested options. Options that are also factory-warrantied—unlike those of the usual mass-produced bikes.

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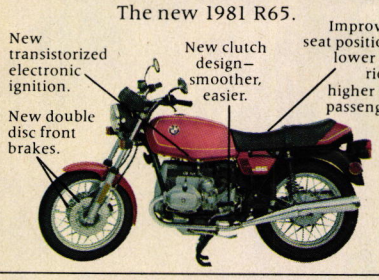
The new 1981 R65.



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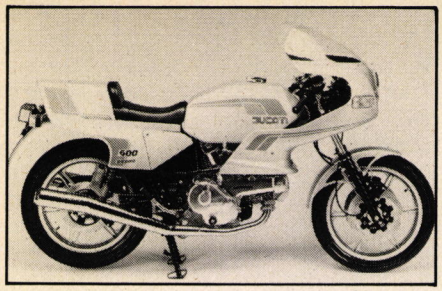
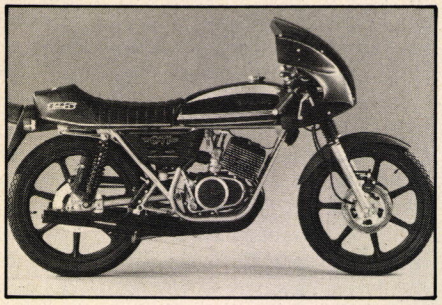


The 600cc Pantah could be a Cheetah

More than just a legal name change.



Malanca's 20-HP, 85-mph, 125cc twin

The world's smallest hyperbike?

• Bell Helmets has a new model in its line, too. The **1981 Star** is the replacement for the popular Star II and also carries the Snell '75 approval. Terry cloth lines the inside of the new helmet, and black, white or silver paint graces the exterior. The suggested retail price is $149.50.

1981 Star is Bell's newest helmet design

The full-coverage original is restyled.

• If keeping track of all the new goodies gets too tiring, then sit back and **enjoy** the re-shot and re-edited version of **On Any Sunday II.** Watch for the release sometime this summer.

FEDERAL CASES

• Full-Floater Suzuki MXers could turn out to be the hot set-up in more ways than one. A heated legal **battle** has arisen over alleged patent infringements pertaining to the suspension design. Don Richardson, a California-

Continued

Your ESPRIT Battery... treat it right and you'll get a charge out of it

By following a little preventative maintenance, you can save a lot of money and your cycle will be ready to go when you are. The rules may seem fundamental but few people follow them.

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3. **Keep terminals clean, coated with petroleum grease and tightly connected to cycle's electrical system.** *Dirty terminals will prevent the battery from delivering the full amount of charge which, in turn, increases wear on the battery ignition system and decreases power performance.*
4. **In winter when cycle is not used, remove the battery and store in a warm place.** *Coat terminals with grease and maintain the water level. Check battery regularly with a motorcycle battery tester and charge periodically throughout the storage period. Remember to check the water level from time to time.*

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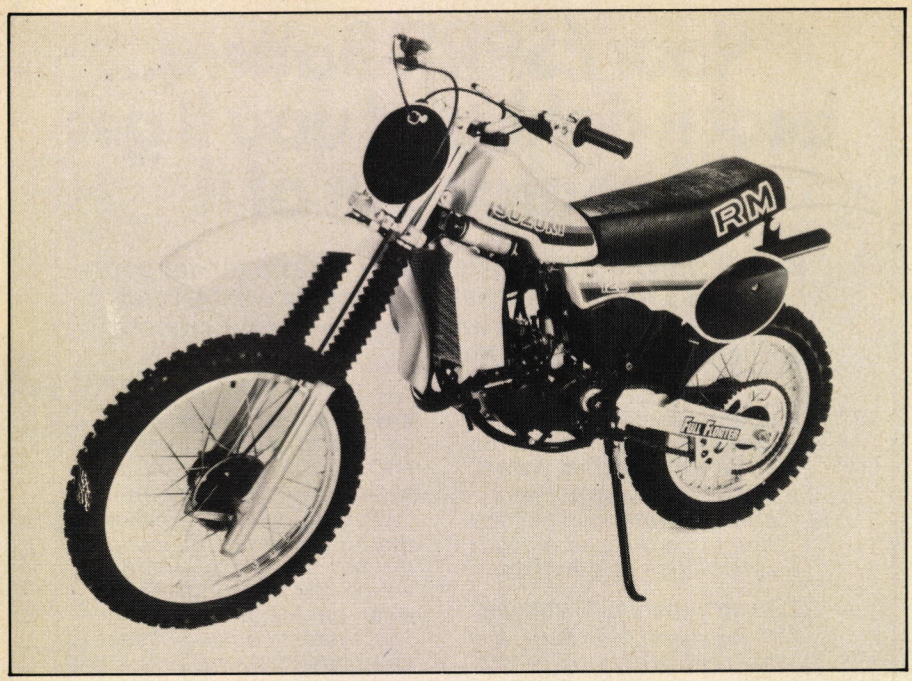

'81 Suzuki RM design under fire

Full-Floaters on stormy seas?

based engineer, claims the Full-Floater concept is a direct **copy** of a suspension system he designed in 1974. In 1978 and 1979 Richardson worked with Suzuki in designing several prototype machines using the **rising-rate** concept, but after studying the design Suzuki declined to enter into a licensing agreement with Richardson. Suzuki claims that its subsequent designs differ from the ideas incorporated in Richardson's original patent. Richardson contends, however, that the **Full-Floater** is in violation of his patent and has won an injunction in the California Superior Court that restrains Suzuki from making use of any of Richardson's concepts. The settlement of the issue seems to rest on the determination of the similarities or differences in the suspension designs. Meanwhile, dealers are scheduled to receive and sell the Full-Floater machines despite the injunction. But it seems the battle is far from over.

• Here's something the dirt crowd doesn't have to worry about. The **NHTSA** has proposed new regulations that would **standardize** the calibration of **radar** guns used by law enforcement agencies across the country. The new standard requires **accuracy** of plus or minus one mph. It won't help if you love to ride fast, but at least you can't get busted for something you didn't do.

• The radar issue is raging elsewhere, too. The highest **court** in Michigan is considering the constitutionality of a 1929 law (MCLA 750.-508) that has been interpreted as prohibiting **radar** detectors. The law, which carries with it a fine of $500 or a year in prison, was originally passed to **prohibit** active radio transmissions that would interfere with police transmissions. The fate of the law is uncertain, since it is apparently in **conflict** with an FCC regulation of 1934—one that prohibits any state legislation of the airwaves. The outcome in Michigan could set a precedent for Connecticut and Virginia, where court **battles** con-

Continued

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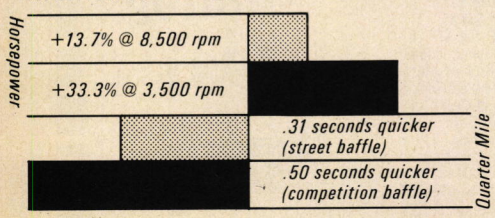
Designed and engineered with quality control and tolerance limits unfound elsewhere in motorcycling, the Kerker KR units exist as serious components for serious motorcycle racing. Each bike has specific configurations that yield limitless cornering clearance making the Kerker the quickest system through even the tightest road-racing corners. Power-oriented design innovations draw extra horses out of even the highest modified, top performance powerplants. Extra horses that out accelerate all competitors from turns or down any drag strip.

The Kerker KR Series. Serious equipment for serious competitors. True bolt-on power. Superbly finished in gun-kote black and delivered with two baffles; one streetable for getting to your race, and one for racing only! Witness the Supreme Power-Performancers, catch the exhilaration of Kerker's KR Series.

Tested: 1981 Suzuki GS 1100



KERKER

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Winning The Warranty Game

The better you play, the less you pay.

• The Warranty Game is played by motorcycle owners, dealers and manufacturers. For you, the owner, being properly prepared to play can translate into substantial dollar savings in the event of a breakdown.

Motorcycle warranties are more than just a piece of paper that's included with your owner's manual. They are a statement of the manufacturer's faith in its product, and a way of instilling that same faith for the product in you. Even though the quality and duration of warranty coverage probably won't change your mind about a new bike, it should really enter into the decision process at some point.

Most of the time, warranty eligibility hinges on expiration dates and mileage limits (if any). Check the date you bought your machine. If you bought it in the slack sales months between August and February, you might be entitled to some bonus time on your warranty. To find out if you are eligible, check with your dealer and ask him to review your policy for this detail. If you're covered, keep a note to that effect somewhere in your owner's manual.

Warranty expirations can be flexible in other ways. Some warranty programs have "special authorization" provisions to cover specific malfunctions. To get a special authorization, your dealer must call the manufacturer's warranty department and personally plead your case. Your chances for coverage might be good if your bike hasn't accrued too many miles, or if the malfunction is chronic to your model.

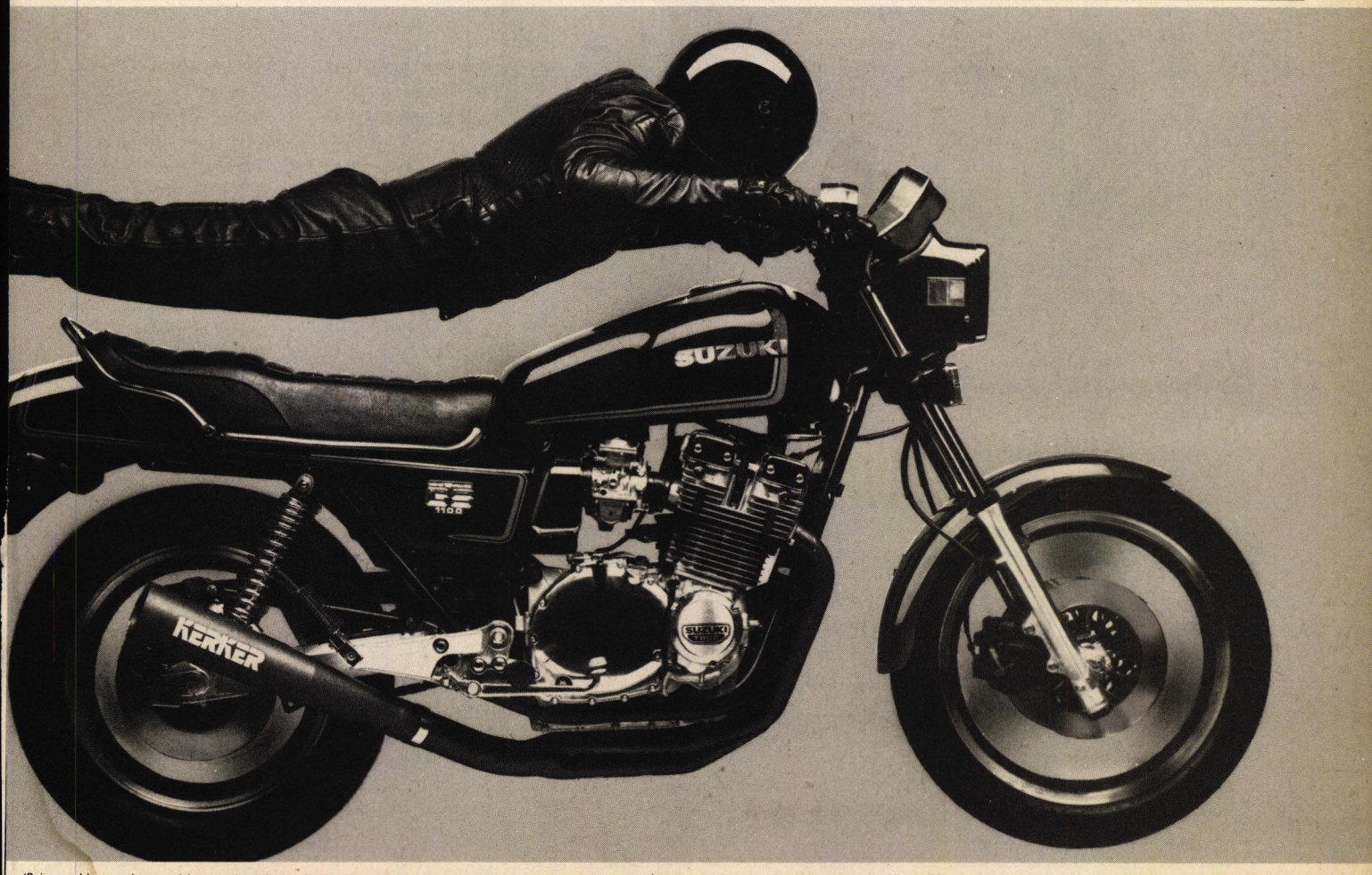
Another form of warranty flexibility is the "recall" or "retrofit." While this is not a warranty repair in the strictest sense, the results for you and your bike are the same. Some recent examples of retrofit involve the 1979 Honda CB750Ks (oil filter bolt boss), and '78–'79 Yamaha XS400s, XS650s and XS750s (fuel petcocks). In most cases, the manufacturer will inform you by letter if your bike is involved in some retrofit or recall campaign. But if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask your dealer if your bike is affected.

In the event of a dispute about warranty coverage, a second opinion from another dealer who sells the same brand can often prove helpful. Advise the dealer of all the details, and show him repair orders, warranty registration and receipts. If the second dealer disagrees with the first, ask him to outline the steps you must observe to set things right. If the second dealer agrees with the first, but you still believe that your claim is within the terms of your policy, it is time to play hardball with the factory.

Appealing your claim directly to the factory is your final defense, and it is best done by letter—for two reasons. First, warranty departments are often too small to handle a large volume of phone inquiries. Even dealers are sometimes unable to connect with the right person to handle the problem. Second, if you state your case clearly, with copies of all pertinent documents, you stand a better chance of getting a quick response. And you might get a pleasant surprise. As referees of warranty problems, manufacturers often respond with laudable impartiality. Cover all bases though, and keep copies of your dealings with the factory—from Day One.

Winning the warranty game, like any other, requires a thorough knowledge of the rules. The benefits or limitations of your warranty might be the last thing you think about as you ride out of the dealership on a new bike. But if something ever breaks, you'll be glad you took the time to become a better player.

—John Porter



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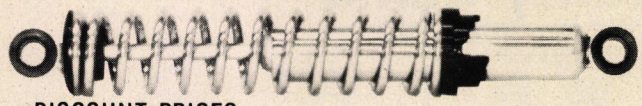

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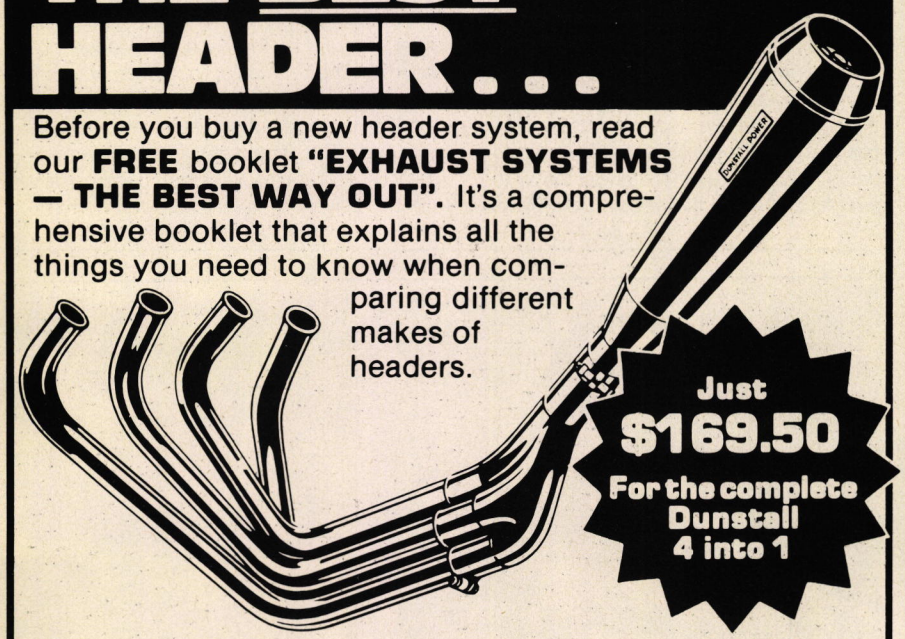

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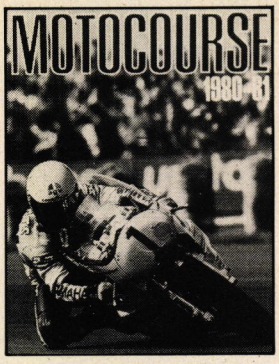

MOTOCOURSE 1980–1981
Edited by Peter Clifford
192 pages, $36.95
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• In its fourth year of publication, "Motocourse" continues to be the foremost photographic and statistical yearbook of Grand Prix roadracing. As usual, its race-by-race coverage of every GP class is backed up this year by summaries of U.S. roadracing, the Easter Match Races, the Endurance World Championship, the Isle of Man and, of course, the numerous British championships that appeal to the book's primarily British readers. This year's edition also features the best color photography so far; it's crisp, rich and close-up.

Even so, "Motocourse" still resembles a fuzzy-minded coffee-table book rather than a definitive history of the year in roadracing. The color photography is stunning for a while, but then it becomes a redundant catalog of bikes suspended in outer space because it does little to communicate the personalities or atmosphere of each event. The text, meanwhile, amounts to little more than a lap chart. Barry Coleman, last year's editor, might have subjected us to endless harangues about the relative merits of the FIM and the World Series (he and Kenny Roberts led the fight to establish the alternate racing championship), but at least he attended the GPs in person, and so was able to place both the races and the season into perspective. Peter Clifford, this year's editor, fails utterly to provide either the anecdotes that make racing come alive or the underlying explanations beneath the race results. Only the section on the U.S. Superbike series gives us the sort of thoughtful analysis of bikes, personalities and races that a high-caliber racing yearbook should deliver.

For all these failures, however, "Motocourse" is still the best deal going in racing annuals—albeit virtually the only one. Buy it for the photography and the statistical summaries. And then hope the publisher ups the ante and creates a more ambitious book next year. —*Michael Jordan*

Continued

IT COMES WITH A TRUNK AND RUNS ON PEANUTS.

The Yamaha Exciter 250T is a most unusual creature.

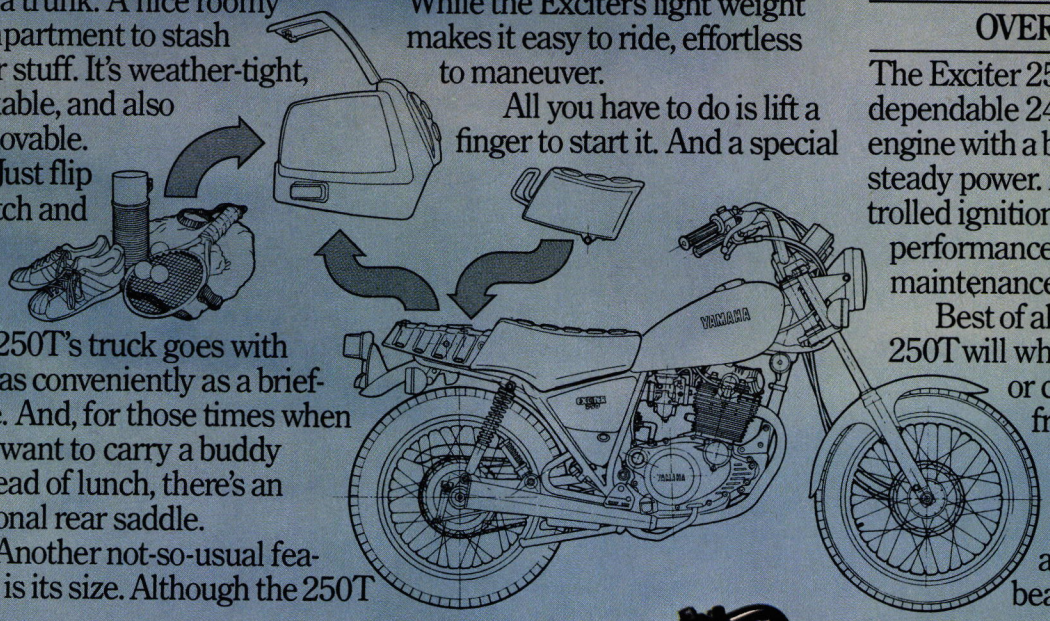
Where most motorcycles usually have a back seat, the 250T has a trunk. A nice roomy compartment to stash your stuff. It's weather-tight, lockable, and also removable.

Just flip a latch and the 250T's truck goes with you as conveniently as a briefcase. And, for those times when you want to carry a buddy instead of lunch, there's an optional rear saddle.

Another not-so-usual feature is its size. Although the 250T is styled like a big bike, it's not big.

A seat height of 28.5 inches gives just about anybody feet-on-the-ground stability at stops. While the Exciter's light weight makes it easy to ride, effortless to maneuver.

All you have to do is lift a finger to start it. And a special mechanism allows the motor to start only in neutral or when the clutch is depressed. So the bike won't leave before you're ready.



OVER 75 MPG.

The Exciter 250T sports a super dependable 249cc four-stroke engine with a balancer for smooth, steady power. A transistor-controlled ignition insures maximum performance with little or no maintenance.

Best of all, the Yamaha Exciter 250T will whisk you around town or carry you down the freeway of life at the phenomenal rate of 75 miles per gallon. Which is probably a lot better than the beast you're driving now.

YAMAHA

THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

Mileage figures based on EPA testing, for city riding. Your mileage may vary depending on the way you ride. Rear view mirror(s) standard equipment. Always wear a helmet and eye protection.

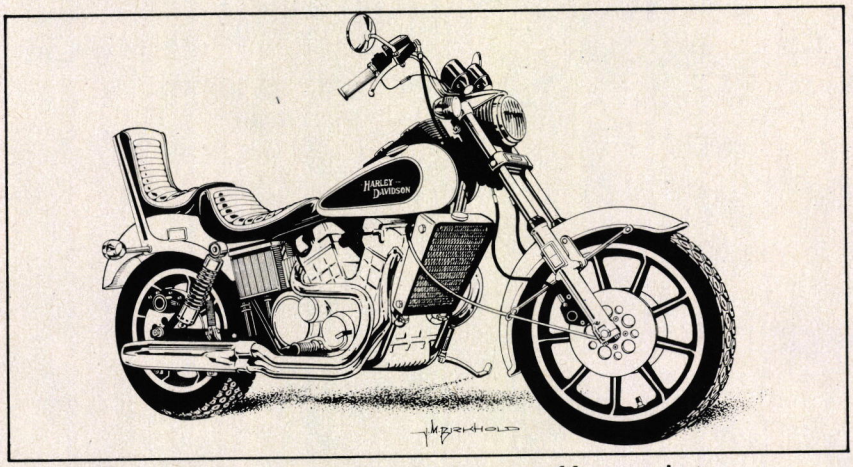
Harley-Davidson On The Block

The price of independence.

• Harley-Davidson, the sole surviving motorcycle manufacturer in America, is apparently about to be sold. Members of top management at H-D have signed a letter of intent with AMF, the current and 13-year owner of Harley, for the purchase of the 78-year-old company. The management group includes John Davidson, Vaugn Beals, Charles Thompson and many others presently a part of the Harley-Davidson division at AMF. The letter of intent means that both AMF and the management group have agreed, in principle, to the sales transaction. The final outcome, however, is undoubtedly many months away, due to the complexity of such dealings.

Capitalization of this large transaction is likely to involve sophisticated, leveraged financing. There are a number of options typically used in similar cases. The buyers could develop an equity base by placing common or preferred stocks (with various voting and redemption rights) with groups and institutions such as insurance companies or investment trusts. Stocks might also be sold to suppliers to H-D, or even to AMF itself. Capital could be generated through term loans from banks, insurance companies or pension plans which could be secured by the physical assets (buildings, machinery, etc.) of Harley-Davidson. More capital might come from the sale and lease-back of some of the H-D facilities.

In spite of the staggering logistics of the sale, spokesmen at Harley insist that everything will be "business as usual" since the same key people will continue to manage the company. Bill Dutcher, public relations contact at H-D, also said that the design philosophy, distribution and dealer network for Harley will all be preserved. Perhaps the new Harley status symbol will become a post-AMF machine.



High costs involved in takeover could restrict the scope of future projects

Could the oft-rumored Porsche-design Harley die on the drawing board?

Continued

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CG-581

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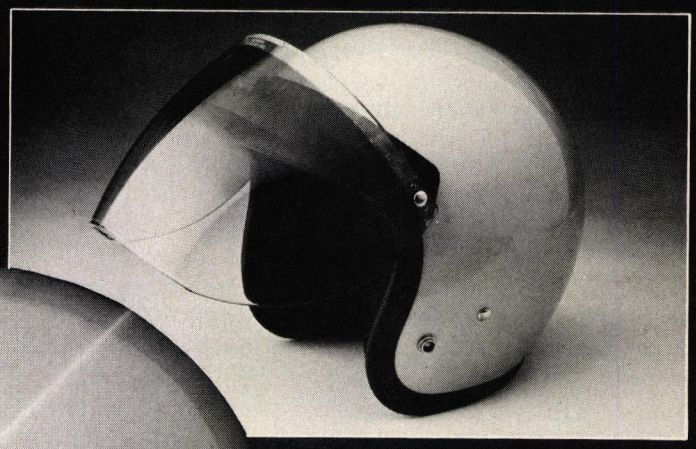

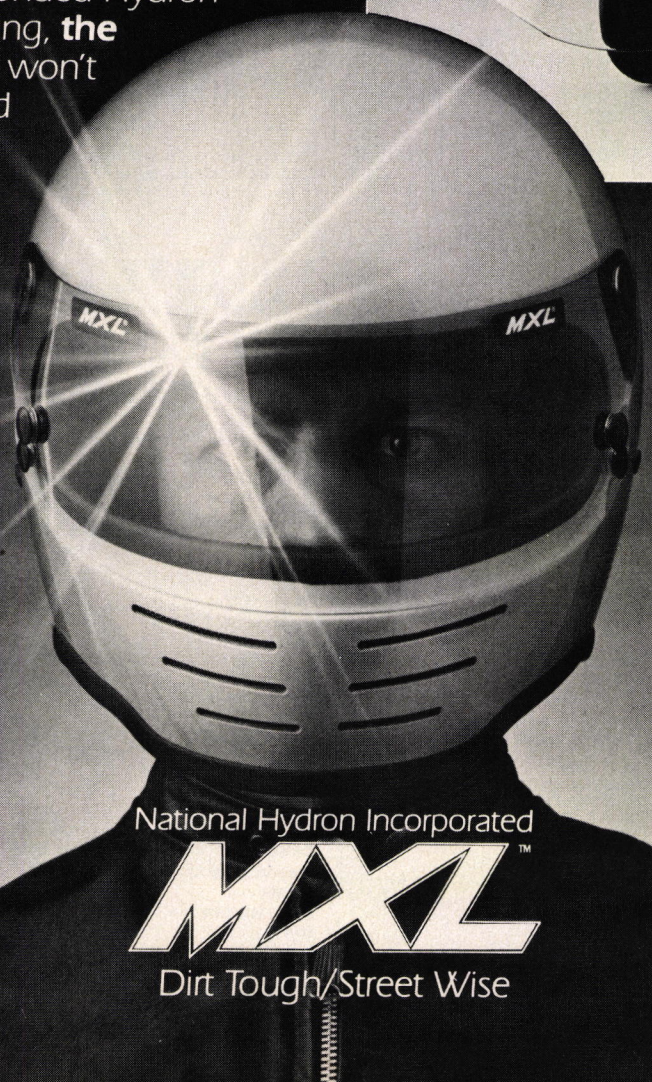

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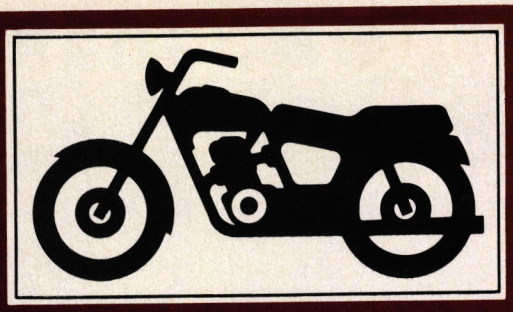

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tinue over the use of radar detectors. The final judgment on the issue is likely to come from a federal court ruling.

• The EPA has finalized its motorcycle **noise** emission standards through 1986. Beginning January 1, 1983, street bikes cannot exceed an 83-decibel limit. The standard **tightens** again on Jan. 1, 1986 to an 80 dB(A) limit. The rules apply to both original and accessory exhaust systems, and should prove to be far easier to meet than the original 78-decibel limit set by the EPA. The government figures suggest that the new rules will add about **$36** per bike in 1986 compared to a projected $120 per bike for the previous 78-decibel level. Things could change again, however, if Reagan has his agency-busting way and the EPA is mandated to limit the scope of its projects in the future.

HARD CASH

• First Nixon cleared the way for Coca-Cola and Caterpillars, and now **Honda** is ready to sell motorcycles to **China.** Plans call for the construction of a plant near Peking that will be capable of producing **150,000** bikes per year. That should be easily absorbed by a market that represents nearly one-fourth of the world's population.

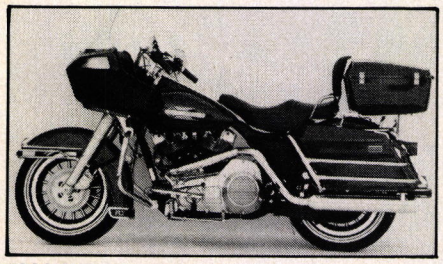
• Another company that is spending big **bucks** to establish new markets is **Krauser**, the renowned German luggage maker. A gigantic new facility has just been completed near Seattle, Washington, and it includes offices, warehouses and **assembly** areas. This is the first time that Krauser has built assembly plants outside of West Germany, and it is expected that the U.S. factory will allow Krauser to **bag** a larger market share for 1981.

• Shares of a different kind will be available to competitors in the **NMRA** dragracing series for 1981. MTC Engineering, a Florida-based piston manufacturer, has posted a total of **$11,000** to be distributed among the winners and runners-up in all the major competition classes.

• Continuing to where the curve for racing and big money intersect, the purse for the upcoming **DuQuoin** Mile will be around $30,000, by all accounts, with $5000 of that coming from **ABC,** which will cover the event for its *Wide World of Sports.*

AFTER THE FACT

• The third time is the charm, the old saying goes, so once again we tested the **brakes** on the Harley-Davidson FLT Tour-Glide (Sept. '80



1980 FLT is back for more

Third time's a charm.

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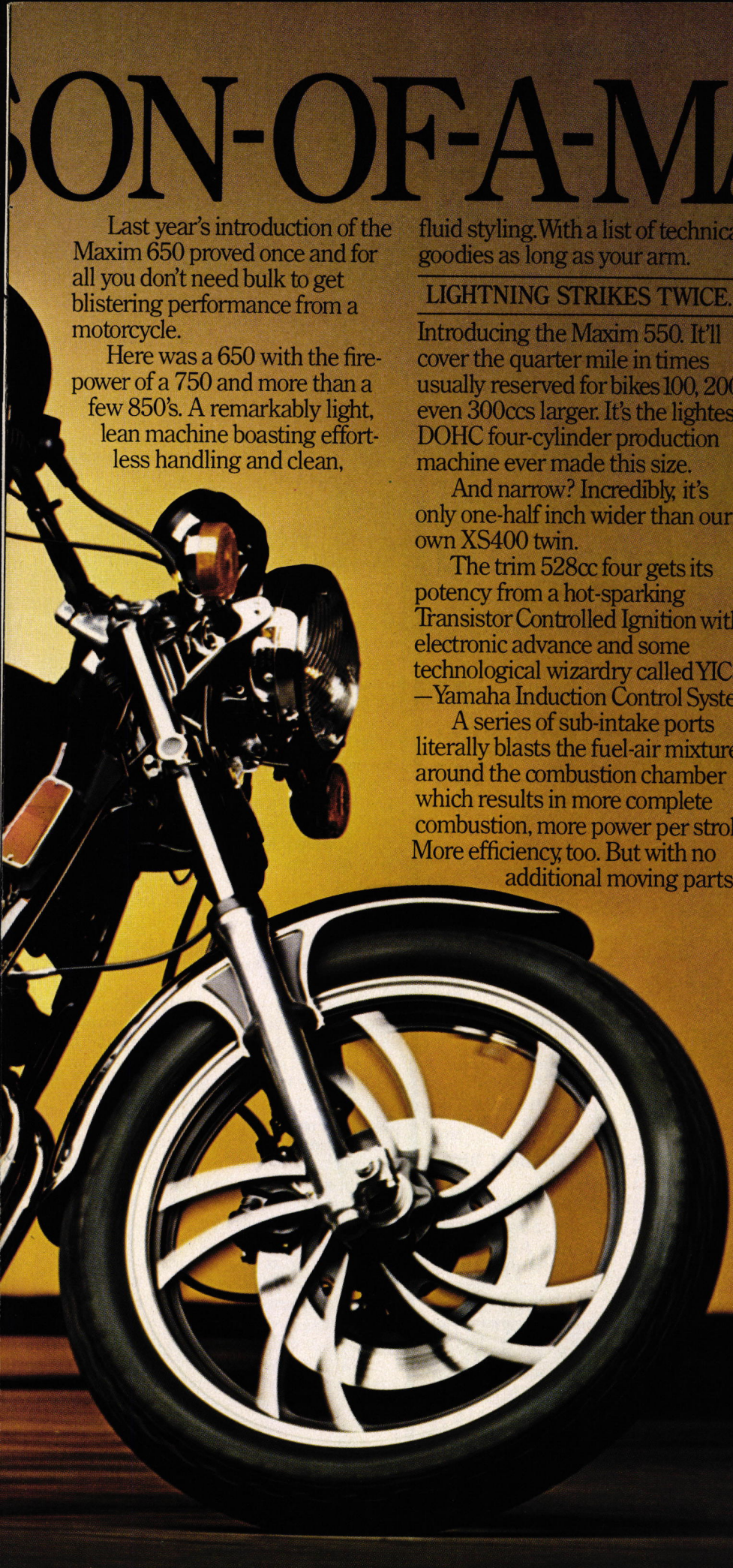

Last year's introduction of the Maxim 650 proved once and for all you don't need bulk to get blistering performance from a motorcycle.

Here was a 650 with the firepower of a 750 and more than a few 850's. A remarkably light, lean machine boasting effortless handling and clean, fluid styling. With a list of technical goodies as long as your arm.

LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE.

Introducing the Maxim 550. It'll cover the quarter mile in times usually reserved for bikes 100, 200, even 300ccs larger. It's the lightest DOHC four-cylinder production machine ever made this size.

And narrow? Incredibly, it's only one-half inch wider than our own XS400 twin.

The trim 528cc four gets its potency from a hot-sparking Transistor Controlled Ignition with electronic advance and some technological wizardry called YICS —Yamaha Induction Control System.

A series of sub-intake ports literally blasts the fuel-air mixture around the combustion chamber which results in more complete combustion, more power per stroke. More efficiency, too. But with no additional moving parts.

Add a six-speed transmission, low center of gravity cast alloy wheels, and unique off-set handlebars, and the Maxim 550's lean performance package is right at home on lonely backroads.

But it's most definitely styled to attract a crowd. Upswept pipes, low two-tier seat, shapely teardrop tank, and a couple of mouthwatering colors—New Ruby Red and New Yamaha Black.

The Maxim 550 is a motorcycle with class-shattering performance, revolutionary engineering, and astounding good looks. But that's not surprising for a Maxim.

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issue) and produced the quickest stop yet. Our first test, which yielded a distance of 233 feet from 60 mph, seemed to be far too long, most likely due to a lack of break-in time for the brake pads. So back we went for another try which, as we reported in Guide Lines in January of this year, produced a 209-foot stop. Subsequent investigation, however, showed that a problem with Harley's front brake-light switch had caused the electronic chalk-marking gun used in brake testing to fire too early, thus invalidating the second measurement. A third and **final** test, done with the chalk-gun problems solved, produced a stop of **161** feet from 60 mph. Case closed.

• Remember our Ride Report of the **Cagiva** 125cc MX'er in last November's issue? Remember the Marzocchi fork it was reported to have? Guess what. The bike actually uses Cagiva's own **fork**, and that should ride well with everyone.

RUMORS

• The **Turbo** CX500 Honda is in the news again. The latest rumor is of a possible release as early as the **1982** model year. But even before the Turbo comes to the showroom, it might make an appearance on the **racetrack**. The word is out to watch for an endurance racing version to debut at the Bol d'Or 24-hour event.

• The turbo timetable seems to be moving pretty quickly these days. **Yamaha** showed its intention to stay in the pressure cooker with the unveiling of its 1982 Turbo Eleven. And now the tuning-fork factory is rumored to be ready to back it up with the introduction of an all-new, **turbocharged,** 400cc four. Insure it like a 400, ride it like a 1000.

• Other whisperings concern the **Suzuki** GS1000S Antman machine. Besides providing the racing department with a legal-size TSCC engine for AMA superbiking, the S could also receive an **anti-dive** fork. All the better to win with, right Wes?

• Speaking of suspension, **Montesa** appears ready to join the ranks of **single-shock** motocrossers. Just such a bike was spotted at a recent event in Holland. The system is said to look a lot like Honda's Pro-link.

• Yamaha, the company that started the single-shock **revolution**, might be getting ready to **abandon** its usual monoshock design. World-class MXer Andre Vromans has reportedly been testing an Open-class Yamaha with a shorter shock and a bell-crank system to give it **progressive** action.

• Other sources suggest that it won't be long before the progressive-rate suspension **trickery** finds its way to the **front** of some street bikes. And that could look really strange.

• Just about wherever you turn these days there's talk that the next generation of battle hardware for berm warfare will be water-cooled **twins.** Of course the popular story continues that the major motocross manufacturers are even now ready with twins, and are just waiting for the patina of newness to completely wear off of the latest batch of omigod

Continued

Coast to Coast Clothing

Whether it's ocean to ocean, or just over to the next county, a brisk weather trip can turn you into an icicle before you hit the on ramp. But warm, comfortable Malcolm Smith Touring Wear provides the features experienced and knowledgeable riders demand.

Like the Malcolm Smith Touring suit. Innovatively constructed and technically superb, it offers comfort, protection and convenience no other suit can match.

Contoured for the riding position, the Malcolm Smith Suit is made of a tough and durable 400 Denier urethane-coated nylon for years of service. Its safety reflective "night stripe" contrasts the Midnight Black or Electric Blue color choices. Suits are available in either a one-piece or jacket/pants combo.

Either way you get Velcro® fasteners on all pockets, cuffs, collar and main closures. Additional features include two-way hand warmer front pockets, adjustable waist belt and double thickness knees and seat.

For extra warmth there's soft, quilted nylon lining packed with 6-oz. polarfill insulation. No sleeve or body seams face wind or moisture. And it's designed to slip easily over regular clothes.

Perfect accessories for the Touring Suit are Malcolm Smith Touring Boots and Gloves, each designed for comfort, style and long-wearing durability. Malcolm Smith even has Signature Sunglasses in many models for use anytime.

Wherever you're going, you'll feel better getting there in Malcolm Smith Touring Wear. Gear to go the distance.

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Tough.
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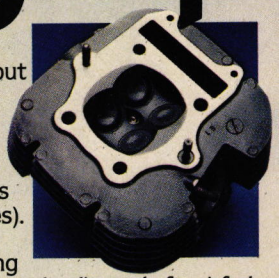
No, we're not talking about the versatile jeep. We're talking about Suzuki's totally new SP-500.

For 1981, the SP is tougher, gutsier and more fun than ever.

One reason is the new-era 500cc 4-stroke single engine. It uses Suzuki's highly-advanced Twin Swirl Combustion Chamber design with 4 valves. Exceptionally clean burning, it pumps out gobs of low and mid-range power (great for rough places). And it's a real gas-squeezer (great anyplace).



Suspension has been beefed up, too. Boxed steel swing arm. Laid-down shocks with 5 adjustments. And longer leading axle front forks.

Don't go away, there's more: New ground-grabbing tires. Maintenance-free PEI ignition. Easy-starting compression release device. Full floating rear brake. And, of course, street legal lights and instrumentation.

In short, the SP-500 is the finest dual-purpose machine this side of...well, a jeep.

Suzuki 1981 The Performer.

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Member Motorcycle Safety Foundation. Ride with care. Always wear a helmet and protective apparel. Ride only where authorized and respect the environment.

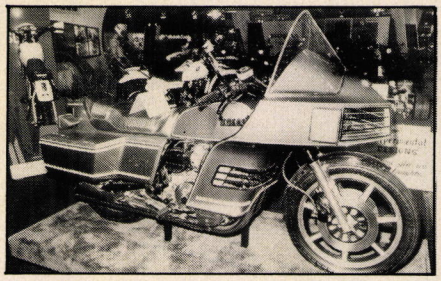
waterpumpers—about two years at the present rate of evolution—before they spring the twin 'pumpers on an anxious and captive audience.

• If you buy that rumor, you won't be fully armed for your next bench race unless you know that **Honda,** in the form of a rumored **ultra-fast** watercooled 125cc twin, has already been linked with the movement.

• Just so that you don't think that this tale centers only on the majors, **Puch** has also been mentioned in the case of the wet twins.

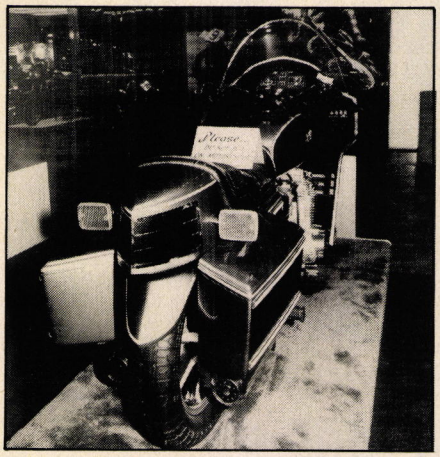
APART FROM THE CROWD

• Ready for the resurrection of **Rudge?** A 1981 prototype is in the form of a Westlake-powered roadracer, but because the engine was originally designed for speedway use it has a **total-loss** oiling system. That could certainly make you think twice before leaning over too far. Fixing this idiosyncrasy could make the famous marque from the Thirties a real proposition as a **club racer,** or maybe even a street version will develop.



Yamaha's styling exercise on the XS1100

Bill Mitchell brings Detroit to you.



The Mitchell/Yamaha features boat-tail rear

The further you get, the better it looks.

• Another street bike project was unveiled by Yamaha in the form of a Bill Mitchell styling exercise. The Detroit designer has penned a machine with all the **grace** of a 1946 Cadillac, which doesn't seem to translate to either motorcycles or 1981. Insiders deny the bike has a **cast-iron** engine and gets 9 mpg, or that the fairing is actually the tail end of a quarter-midget racer. •

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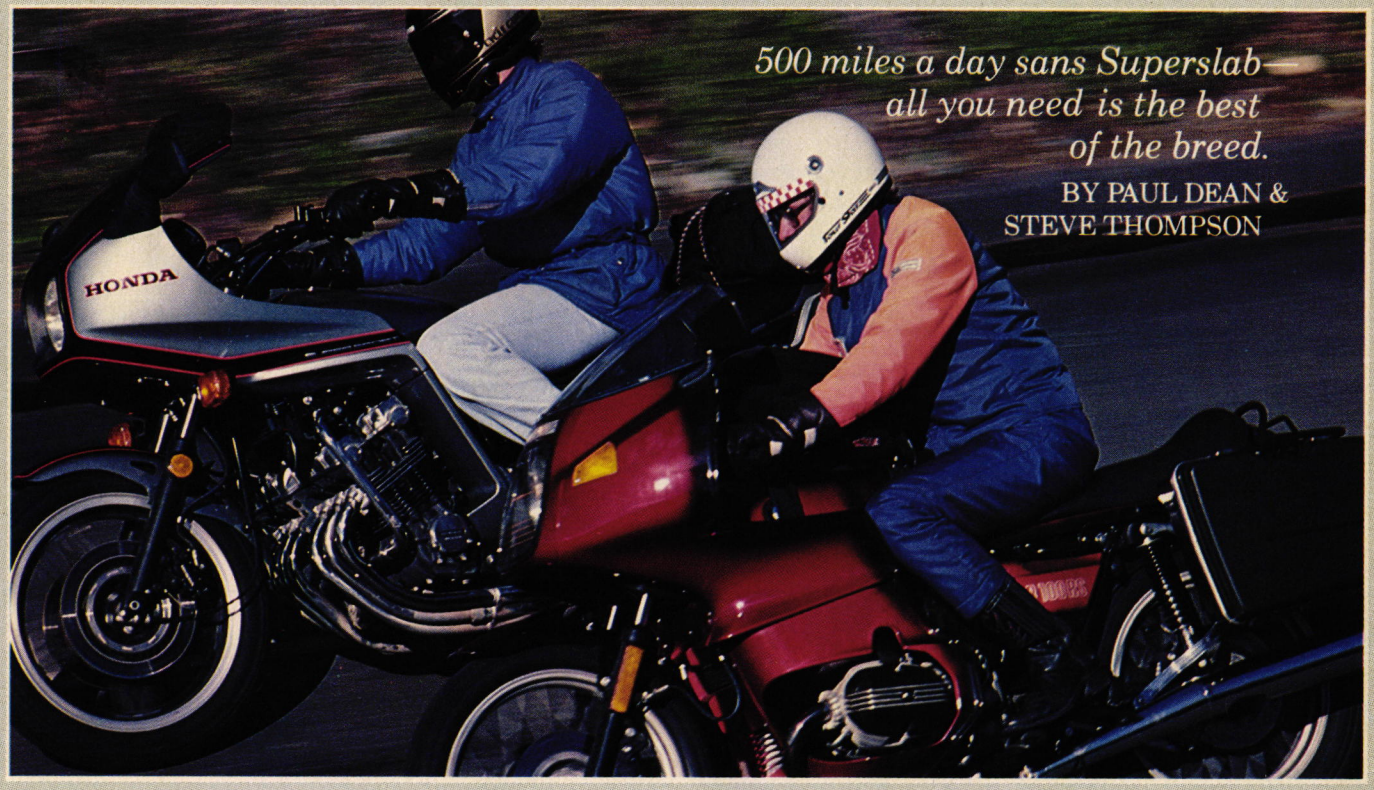
SPORT-TOURING COMPARISON:

BMW R100RS vs. Honda CBX Supersport



500 miles a day sans Superslab—all you need is the best of the breed.

BY PAUL DEAN & STEVE THOMPSON

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 TOM RILES

Someone once said that the difference between Touring and Sport Touring is butterflies: When you're Touring, you look *at* the butterflies. But when you're Sport Touring, you look *through* them—because they're splattered all over your windshield.

The problem with this one-liner is simple: It supposes that the main difference between the two methods of getting between Points A and B is the speed with which it's done. And speed, while important to underlining the "sport" in Sport Touring, is only part of the definition.

Other equally important qualities of the pastime are embodied in the machines faced off in this comparison test. Who can ogle the arrogant lines of the BMW R100RS and not feel, instantly, the impact of complete refinement? Or who can fail to spot, in the swoopy, spaceship-styled Honda CBX Supersport, the high-strung power of a marque thoroughbred? It's a double-moot point; not many folks can resist either. Both machines look and feel expensive—the BMW in a muted Old Money way, the CBX in the overstated manner of the highest of Hi-Tech. If these two motorcycles were watches, the BMW would be a solid gold Rolex President and the CBX would be a platinum Seiko.

But they're not watches, they're Sport Tourers. In our minds, the cream of a tiresomely small crop. One of them is best at delivering the ingredients of the Ultimate Sport Tour. And our goal was to find out which, by doing our own sport tour, 2300 miles worth. A week on the road, bags filled with only enough to sustain life at the waypoints, and a pocketful of credit cards for necessities. Another way to think of sport touring is as credit-card touring. Without the carrying capacity of a Honda Interstate, you leave for parts unknown stripped to the bare bones, carrying only plastic Clout in your wallet.

You also leave without an itinerary—and the mental baggage it brings. We never knew, at day's end, where we'd be the next evening. All we knew was that in getting there we'd treat Interstate highways as The Enemy. Which, in this test, they were; how could we find a winning sport tourer if we stuck to roads where the only sport would be counting mile-markers?

And there *is* a winner. One of these motorcycles will go as fast as stylishly as you can stand, every day, for as long as you can twist its wick. We started out with firm ideas about which would do it best—Dean looked at the silver splendor of the CBX and instantly stamped his name on it, while I plumped for the quiet elegance of the blazing-red Beemer—and we came back with equally firm ideas about which actually did it best.

Which one was that? Well, it's a long story—but I'll give you one clue: Breeding, as always, will tell.

—*Steve Thompson*

Continued

BMW R100RS

For Sale: Genius and beauty. Serious inquiries only.

Sport touring is to me a matter of keeping a fine sense of judgment between the conflicting demands of speed and scenery. That's why I really didn't have any choice in this BMW-Honda faceoff: The BMW R100RS was *the* selection.

Call the reason a sense of breeding, if you wish to graft a horsey term onto the motoworld, or maybe just an aura of class, but the R100RS convinced me it had it in spades when I first saw it five years ago. Canyon racing, dragracing, supermarket runs—I knew the thing wasn't very good at any of those, but when Dean and I plunged into a European touring mode, this motorcycle snapped into focus as though seen through finest Zeiss ground glass. The fairing alone elevates the RS above the rest of the bike world, and is a kind of visual metaphor for the rest of the machine. Painstakingly developed by BMW in the remorseless mathematics of the wind tunnel, its complex shape is still unmatched by anything on the road—in either function or form.

Touch 100 mph behind this cockpit and you'll know why that little fluted canard wraps around the midpoint of the fairing, or why the air cooler is sealed on its edges. The air behind it is undisturbed by the ton-up numbers, as is the rider, while the downforce aids in gluing it all to the ground. Moreover, the Lava-Red paint that graces the new RS seems to glow hypnotically; you always find a new shade to catch your eye, a new luster to delight it. Finished inside in matte black, the fairing weighs about 20 pounds and sports only two instruments on its "dashboard"—a quartz clock and a voltmeter. No pockets, no gimmicks, not even a Can-Caddy. This, says the RS fairing, is a serious motorcycle, for the serious job of sport touring.

The absence of gimmickry and the presence of such a remarkable fairing shows you that the BMW folks understand, *really* understand, what sport touring is all about. Follow the logic and you'll see why, starting with that 20-pound fairing.

It's light and simple because a sporting tour is done on twisty, unpredictable roads. Gimmicks add weight, usually up high, where it affects transition response—and good transitions from left lean to right lean can make the difference between a fast, pleasant ride or an aching body . . . perhaps worse if the rider has overshot an unknown corner. In that case, the added weight of goodies on the dash could mean the difference between wrestling it around on your side of the road or confronting the grille of a station wagon on the other.

The rest of the bike follows the pattern. No engine configuration known to man is better at aiding the low *cg* desired in a flick-left-flick-right bike than the opposed twin. When BMW's familiar-but-aged design grew to its current 980cc, the mass of those cylinders became a design problem; so BMW this year lopped three pounds off of each jug by doing away with the cast-iron liners and coating the bores with its Nikasil alloy-hardening process—which, in addition to saving weight, also allows faster break-in, cooler running and, according to BMW, lower oil consumption.

Inboard from the cylinders, subtle changes reflect more understanding of the special mission of this and maybe all BMWs. While the notchy transmission has remained untouched, the clutch re-

Continued

Honda CBX Supersport

Re-thought and re-aimed at Munich's finest.

In the two-and-a-half years that there's been a CBX, I've maintained this . . . this gut-wrenching love/hate relationship with it. Which is to be expected, I guess, since on the one hand I'm a hopeless hardware junkie who finds the intricacies of Honda's 24-valve DOHC Six utterly fascinating. At the same time, I'm outraged by the CBX simply because it hasn't justified its complexity by delivering superior high performance. There are faster, better-handling and more-comfortable motorcycles that are simpler and cost less. Like I said, classic love/hate fodder.

That was, of course, before the *new* CBX, the Supersport, the completely rethought sport-touring flashbike you see here. Because what Honda has more or less done with this motorcycle is to jack up the entire model designation and drive a new concept under it. (See "CBX: New destination for an old flagship," pg. 60.) And the very instant I laid eyes on one for the first time, I felt that the CBX had at last found a segment of motorcycling in which it could rule supreme. *That,* I said to myself with 20/20 hindsight, is precisely what the bike should have been in the first place: a damn-the-torpedoes sport tourer targeted to give the high-falutin' BMW R100RS some long-overdue competition. It seemed likely, in fact, that the hallowed Beemer would end up eating dust behind the CBX, Japan's first all-out sport tourer.

God knows, the Supersport appeared to have sufficient credentials to pull off such an ambitious feat. Wind-tunnel-designed full sport fairing; Pro-Link rising-rate rear suspension that, along with some other chassis refinements, promised to de-quirk the CBX's handling; bold, integrated styling as modern as Luke Skywalker's X-

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Wing fighter; smallish, high-style detachable saddlebags; and, of course, brute, asphalt-gobbling horsepower that the chuffa-chuffa BMW couldn't even begin to match. In my mind, that seemed an exciting alternative—maybe the only *real* alternative—to BMW's conservative approach to sport touring.

Not that I'm anti-BMW. It's just that as functional and time-proven as Doktor Beemer's opposed-twin wunderbike might still be, BMW-ness had begun, for me, at least, to get *old*. I'm a typical American in that I get bored with most playthings once the new wears off; and I'm also a typical motorcyclist in that I lust after bikes that can accelerate with enough force to squash my eyeballs. So, since every BeeEm I'd been on in recent years felt both relatively slow and just about like every other one I'd ridden, the Supersport appealed to me in a big way. It promised me newfound sport-touring exhilaration through the magic of space-age styling, contemporary technology and warp-nine performance.

It took all of about 30 seconds near our test CBX for my bubble to spring a leak, if not burst. I sat on it, rocked it from side to side, then got off and groaned it up onto its centerstand. Jeez, it felt incredibly *big!* And that impression was soon confirmed on CYCLE GUIDE's certified scales to the tune of 646 pounds—not exactly the stuff of which legendary handling is made.

I also discovered, before the CBX ever turned a wheel on our ride, that you can't stuff much cargo into its small and irregularly shaped saddlebags. And when my Eclipse tank bag was parked atop the 6.1-gallon fuel supply, the swept-back semi-European handlebars were limited to just a few degrees of steering movement. So to avoid having a Scenicruiser-class turning radius on this behemobike, I just bungied the bag onto the back of the seat. So much of ideal sport-riding weight distribution and easy roadmap access.

What's more, the CBX's ludicrous blister-pack toolkit, standard fare on Japanese bikes, falls far short of the BMW's in every way. It consists of an inexpensive vinyl bag that's *just* big enough to house a low-buck and incomplete tool assortment that must be crammed into a small, non-

Continued

BMW R100RS

ceived special attention, both to ease its operation and to lighten it. The former comes by way of a redesigned throwout arm and added support for the clutch pushrod, and the latter by shaving a whopping seven pounds off the clutch's weight. The factory claims a 30-percent reduction in actuation effort and better throttle response, and, while human hands may not be able to quantify it, the effort *is* reduced and the changed flywheel effect instantly noticeable; rev this Beemer and it evidences none of the previous bike's hesitancy in altering rpm.

The EPA hasn't made it easy. In 1980, BMW met the rigorous emissions regs with an air-suction system (something like Kawasaki's) to inject air into the exhaust ports on demand. Key to the theory were reed valves in the airbox, and last year's experience showed the system to be basically sound, with the occasional exception of a popping in the exhaust pipes caused by too-small reeds. Hence a retrofit for '80 and bigger reeds in '81, and the addition of electronic ignition and a second crossover pipe in the exhaust system, which the factory says merits comparison to a Honda-style "power chamber."

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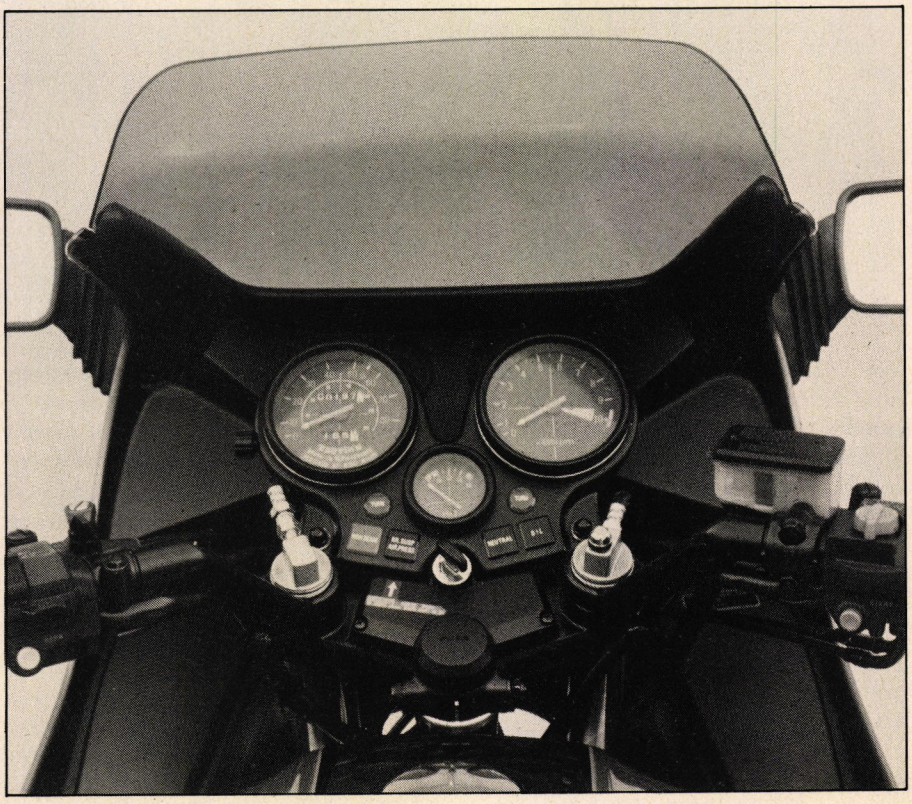
Concern for weight also drove the engineers to redesign the rear-axle housing. They die-cast the new one smaller, and with more webbing and an integral filler neck. Small changes, admittedly, much like the switch this year from a pinched-in driveshaft tube to a fully circular one for greater strength (the old one was dented to clear the tire). Such refinements have kept the bike to 492 pounds, even with its EPA- and DOT-mandated equipment.

This weight class, of course, usually belongs to the Japanese 550s and 750s. But while some might see that as an achievement, those who don't subscribe to BMW mythology will point to the machine's leisurely (13.4-second), sub-100mph quarter-mile runs and sneer that it's hardly surprising, given the performance, that it

HONDA CBX

removable toolbox (behind the left sidecover) that's *just* big enough to contain the kit. Any additional tools must be either stuffed into your luggage or carried in the two little storage compartments in the fairing. I know that tools are a big deal only if you have to do some unplanned maintenance (chain adjustment, flat-tire repair, etc.) while on the road; but since real sport touring is done on secondary routes and remote back roads, a complete, expandable and easy-to-use toolkit—like the BMW's—is an invaluable asset.

Still, after a full day of either chasing or leading Thompson's BMW through Highway One's smooth coastline twisties, I felt good about the CBX. Indeed, Pro-Link *had* improved the handling in fast corners, especially with the pressures in the rear air shock (28 to 60 psi) and front air fork (7 to 13 psi) near the high end of the recommendation scale, and with the shock's three-position damping-adjustment knob pulled all the way out to its firmest setting. There sometimes was the slightest hint of a twitch in high-speed sweepers, but otherwise the CBX was as steady through the turns as a battleship in drydock. Not only



Stylish ABS plastic fairing mounts too far forward for maximum protection

Parting the sea of air too early causes an ill wind to blow your way.

weighs like a 550, since it *runs* like one.

If BMW were trying to build a better Honda, there might be validity to that. But it's time that Americans realized that BMW builds very specialized machinery. It's capable of many roles, of course, but this RS is a machine honed and tuned to do one job better than anything else in the world. In search of ever-new markets to conquer, the Japanese are now feeling out that world—witness the CBX Supersport. But, conservative that I am in matters motorcycle, I gambled and clung to the RS when we had to choose, even though I'd never toured on it.

In practical terms, the gamble really wasn't, of course, because while Dean had to make do with his convoluted CBX saddlebags, for instance, the variety available to me with the RS was staggering—a virtue of model longevity. I opted for Krauser Starlets instead of the traditional BMW Motobags, because the Starlets are almost 25 percent smaller than the others. To make up for the volume, I added a BagMan tank bag, chosen not only because it was a new addition to the market but also because a glance told us it was shaped perfectly for a BMW's somewhat narrow gas tank.

Thus outfitted, it took no effort at all for me to see $7500 of value in the R100RS, knowing the kind of roads we were about to go up against. But silhouetted against the massive flanks of Dean's silver CBX, all airiness and simplicity contrasted against the awesome architecture of his weapon, I must admit to a brief pang of doubt.

We had a week to test the pangs. A week of riding one bike all day, then switching to the other. A week of aiming for where the Superslab wasn't, for going where the whim took us. Living out of saddlebags like motorcycle nomads, using plastic cards to make up for our limited gear. No place on sleek vehicles like these for tents or stoves or freeze-dried peas. The object here is to savor speed and sun, roads and The View, and cap it off relaxing in the best bath of the best room of a five-star hotel at day's end.

At day's end of the first day, it was blindingly clear to me that the Honda would have to be supernatural to beat the RS at the game. Consider the kind of riding and you'll see why: The rules of sport touring call for a pace between, at one end, WFO win-or-die and, at the other, Vertical Riding. In practical terms, on an unfamiliar but enticing two-lane, dry and sparsely travelled road, that means riding on your side of the road, using sooner-than-racing-level braking points, apexing the turn with trailing throttle if it's blind, and leaving enough options in lean angle to go inside or outside of a sudden danger, like sheep, sheep drop-

Continued

that, the undercarriage bits have been tucked in so tidily that absurd lean angles were possible before the sparks started to fly. And with a nearly 50-percent advantage in horsepower, the Honda was able to run away from the R100RS on the straights as though the BMW were chained to a post.

I was convinced at this early stage in our ride that the Honda would emerge the winner. But not for long. We turned off of the smoothness and consistency of Highway One's corners and headed into the Coast Range. The roads soon got bumpier and slipperier. The turns got tighter and less predictable. The straights got fewer and shorter. The weather turned, if you'll pardon the expression, to shit: rain, sleet, snow and mud, with a double order of cold on the side. And as I alternately rode both bikes through all of that, most of the points I thought had gone in favor of the CBX began, one by one, to swing toward the BMW's side of the scorecard.

Like, for instance, the Honda's fairing. Wind-tunnel-designed it might have been, but its top half is mounted too far forward to offer much rider protection. Too, there's no shielding for the rider's hands, plus there's a gaping hole around the front fork

Continued

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BMW R100RS

pings or a startled country collie chasing the sheep. Thus, what you need in a motorcycle is one that not only doesn't wobble under changes of throttle setting, but also one which doesn't try to stand up when you grab a handful of double-disc. Further, you need a relationship between throttle response, riding position, brake sensitivity and power delivery that minimizes the effort you have to expend on making the bike do what you want, since most of your attention damn well better be on the corner. A good Grand Touring machine does not require its rider to perform roadracer athletics to extract its optimum performance, for such acrobatics will wear the poor guy out in a hundred miles of twisties, let alone five hundred a day.

The Honda CBX did not meet any of my requirements. It squirted from one corner to another in a wonderful adrenaline rush, demanded frequent gearbox-stirring to match road and engine speeds as required, wobbled fiercely at high speeds in sweepers and at medium speed in hairpins, had a one-position seat and plain wore me out every time I rode it. It was fast, flashy and ill-suited to the job.

HONDA CBX

that isn't sealed with rubber boots as on the RS. So even though the fairing knifes through the air with apparent efficiency, the parted airstream comes back together too soon to miss the rider. Except for the Honda's superior coverage for the feet and lower legs, then, the RS's cockpit is far warmer, drier and less turbulent. Considering how much any full fairing costs in terms of added weight and price, the CBX's 25-pound ABS plastic unit doesn't offer much functional payback.

Then there's the question of fairing location as it applies to handling. Honda, you see, has been a proponent of "mass centralization" (Honda-speak for the placement of as much of a bike's mass as possible as *close* as possible to its center of gravity, which is, naturally, near the center of the motorcycle) for several years. Yet the CBX's fairing seems to have been positioned unusually far *forward*—mass *de*centralization, as it were.

In all fairness, I honestly don't know if the CBX would have handled better with the fairing moved rearward; but I do know that when the pavement became undulating, the bike tended to waver and wallow.

Ah, but the BMW. Its story was different. *It* was the promise fulfilled. For mile after mile of back roads, I could rush from one turn to another without seeming effort. Spending most of any trip in third or fourth gear, rolling off slightly under braking, swooping gracefully into the bend, rolling on again, the thunder of the Boxermotor echoing off the grass or rock or pine wall on the inside. Ironically, the crouched riding position proved a blessing, despite my fears that the broken bone in my right hand, which had never healed properly after a racing accident in 1976, would cause me untold agonies without the rush of wind on my chest to lift the weight. Reason: First, with the flat seat, the clip-on-style handlebar gave me a variety of riding positions, including chin-on-tank-bag, with the result that even on the Interstates, it was possible to move around enough to eliminate pain points.

Further, although the suspension of the RS is hardly cutting-edge stuff for 1981, the improved fork (made for instead of by BMW this year, with more nylon bushings to eliminate clanking and smooth the 6.3 inches of travel) simply ate the terrain like a vacuum cleaner, delivering a smooth, graceful ride with no surprises. At very

Continued

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And I *had* to wonder just how much the fairing had to do with it. Honda's engineers certainly deserve a pat on the back for crafting a bike with exceptionally good handling traits considering that they had a 646-pound hulk to work with. But Father Physics can be fooled only for so long, and once anything upsets the CBX—whether it's pavement, the wind, abruptly snapping the throttle closed or flicking through a set of switchbacks—when it's at or above eight-tenths hard-turning mode, it reacts with enough of a disconcerting wallow to make you slow down. The R100RS, too, can be a bit imprecise under those same conditions, but with 150 fewer pounds of mass to deal with, the rider isn't as intimidated.

The lesson you soon learn with the CBX is not to try and do things too abruptly when you're riding fast. And even when you're rounding slow turns with a bit of aggression, you notice the effects of the CBX's weight, its lengthy wheelbase (61 inches minimum, up two inches from last year) and its slowish steering geometry (29½-degree head angle, up two degrees for 1981). You just sort of lumber around tight turns rather than zip through them. Not that the BeeEm is particularly grace-

Continued

BMW R100RS

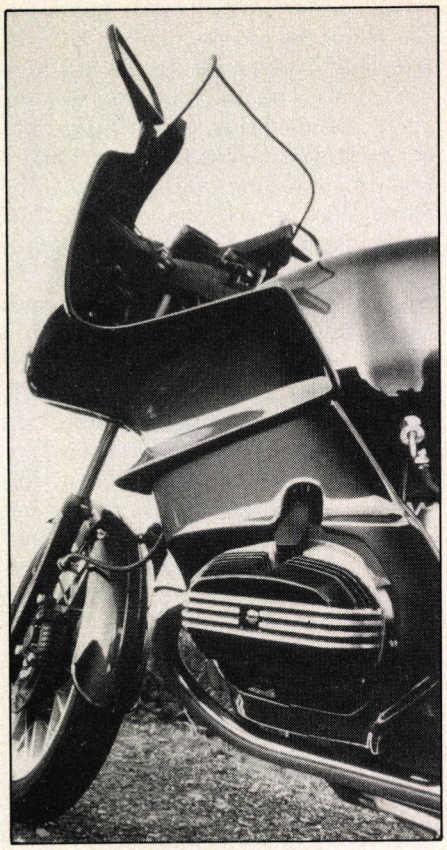
high speed, some hunting was present, but we're speaking here of racetrack velocities, and like dragracing, supermarket runs or canyon blitzes, that's not the RS mission profile.

The week taught me that the bike was flawed, in some areas quite seriously. Some things I had expected were gone, for instance—the snake-dance wiggling in rain grooves—but compensating were irritants like a sidestand that grounded continually until we dragged it enough to wear it half off and bend it out of harm's way, matched by a centerstand whose design required a lot of muscle to use, either going up or down. And yes, those 65 ponies did go away fast up at 8000 feet in the Sierras.

But. But in trade for that I got a 2300-mile average of 44 mpg (the Honda managed only 32.3 mpg), and the knowledge, every time I zeroed in on a series of twisties, that I'd emerge smiling at the other end. Moreover, its amenities were so splendid (ever see a BMW tool kit? It's tucked inside a removable plastic tray that's sealed by a rubber top and contains a vast array of goodies. Or try the little glovebox that lives under the tailcone fairing, which actually will swallow two sets of winter gloves? Or how about the tire pump nestled by the lefthand subframe rail? The list goes on and on.) and the weather protection of the fairing so good (with the exception of the cylinder scoops, which might as well be water-venturis to soak your feet), I knew I could arrive at sunset smiling after 500 miles of twisties, day after day, rain, shine, snow or puncture.

This motorcycle is about control. Its designers presuppose that you have self-control to use it within its profile, and they build into it enough control for you to hammer it right up to that point. Because of that, it's hard for a lot of people to understand, let alone match, with its $7500 (with saddlebags) pricetag.

For me there's no problem. The R100RS *defines* sport touring, as far as I'm concerned. The fact that it's also about the classiest device ever built only adds luster to its appeal. Its performance alone makes it the winner of this test for me, but its virtual aristocracy puts it so far out front that even a CBX that really handled couldn't touch it. And for that unique combination of genius and beauty, the price is immaterial. —*Steve Thompson*



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HONDA CBX

ful in hairpins, either; but its problem is that the narrow handlebar doesn't allow much leverage at low speeds, and that's a much easier handicap for the rider to overcome than is the size of the CBX.

There's also a difference in the ease in which these bikes will bank over into a turn while being heavily braked. The Honda, with its enormous weight and comparatively high center of gravity, forcefully resists being tilted over when the brakes are hard at work. The low-*cg* BMW, on the other hand, corners almost as easily with the brakes on as with them off. And while that's generally not all-important while cruising at normal rates, it can be *crucial* when you overcook a corner at a healthy sport-tour pace and have to scrub off a lot of speed while actually turning. Chalk up one more point for the BMW.

You can make that *two* points if you compare the comfort quotients of both bikes. Personally, I despise the tightness I get between my shoulder blades after about three hours on the R100RS, but at least I can squirm around and concoct enough alternative temporary riding positions to relieve the agony. Not so on the Honda. It's just dandy for the first hour or two, what with all of its controls and contact points in precisely the right place for me. But numbbutt sets in soon after, and you quickly find that there are no alternative places to park your sore buns. When you scoot back a few inches, for instance, the slickness and forward slope of the stylish seat just make you slide right up to where you were before.

Thank God, then, that the Honda's suspension can be tuned for a much more plush ride than the Beemer's. The BeeEm is limited to the usual shock-spring preload adjustment, thus the middle-of-the-road tuning of its suspension will never let the ride be as cushy as on the Honda when its air-and-damping adjustments are on full soft. In fact, for those times when fast cornering is not a priority and you have to drone over the bumpety-bump of a concrete-slab highway, the Honda's fork and shock can be regulated to put you into Seventh Heaven.

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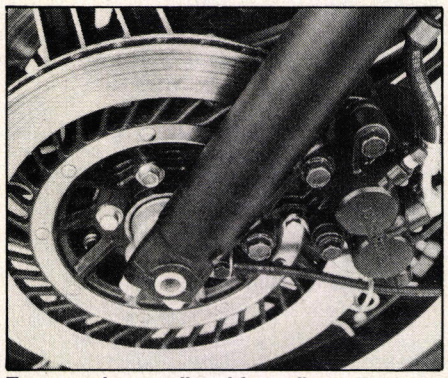


Two massive ventilated front discs

Air in the system can help braking.

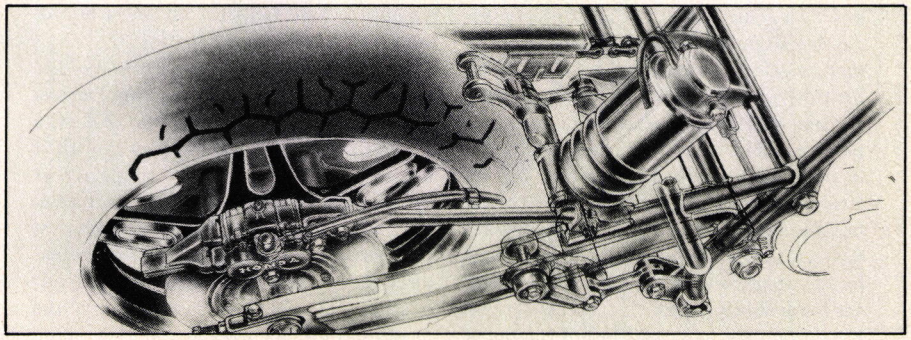
its own game. It's just that the Honda approaches sport touring from an entirely different angle than the BMW. And in the end, it does the job almost as well. But when you tally what it does better than the RS (accelerates, rides and costs $2000 less) and weigh that against what the Beemer does better (sport-tour handling, overall comfort, fairing protection, fuel mileage, cargo capacity, toolkit), the imbalance rocks the scales toward the R100RS.

Class? Well, like beauty, that's pretty much in the eye of the beholder, so I'll leave that one to you. And I'll admit that for general all-around riding, the CBX interests me much more. Just as I'll concede that for blitzing around in some never-ending flatness, like in the Midwest, for example, the high-powered Honda would be a more logical choice. And I'm even willing to be convinced that if your idea of sport touring is to go like a bat out of hell along the straights leading up to a corner, then tippy-toe around that bend with great trepidation before blasting WFO down the next straight, maybe the CBX is your ticket to the good times. But if you see sport touring as *we* see it—and rode it—make no mistake: The BMW is still The King.

—Paul Dean

Still, even though the Honda won that suspension confrontation, as well as the battle of horsepower hill, in the end it lost The Big One, the over-the-road sport-touring war. I had been dead-wrong: The CBX did not and could not leave the BMW languishing in its dust.

Which is not to imply, incidentally, that the CBX is in any way a sport-touring motorcycle without merit. On the contrary, it's an extremely competent and exciting machine that's far better suited to the task than its predecessors. That's why it came remarkably close to outdoing the BMW at



Honda's air-spring shock has only an indirect link with the aluminum swingarm

Multiple links and joints give rise to a progressive-rate suspension.

Continued

CBX: New Destination For An Old Flagship

• Some critics are bound to claim that Honda's top brass cast the troubled CBX into a sport-touring role simply because "they had to do *something* with it." But once you're cognizant of the vast re-engineering that went into the Supersport, you're not likely to think of it as a last-ditch effort to save the Six. Just about every part of the bike either is all-new or has been carefully re-seasoned according to R&D's special recipe for sport touring.

Honda's engine wizards, for example, have cranked the bhp output of the 1047cc double-cammer back up almost to its 1979 hyperbike level after it was dramatically reduced last year. That's why, despite weighing almost 90 pounds more than the 1980 model, the Supersport is just a heartbeat slower through the quarter mile.

Surprisingly, though, it didn't take much trickery to relocate those lost horses, while at the same time meeting even stiffer EPA emissions strangulations than in '79. New cams with greater lift and duration are part of the reason, but Honda is adamant that the bulk of the power boost is due to the CBX's first-ever exhaust-system crossover pipe. But according to Honda's tech spokesmen, not just *any* crossover was acceptable to R&D's exhaust specialists, who experimented at great length with the pipe's exact size and location.

There are a few smaller changes to the engine that have, naturally, had lesser effects. One is that the six 28mm Keihin CV carbs now are mounted with four degrees less forward inclination to yield more consistent idling characteristics. Another is the switch back to a dual-stage electronic spark advancer (similar to that used in '79) that renders an ignition curve more congruous with the new power curve. There also are dimensional differences in the piston rings, and the clutch now uses coil-spring shock dampers instead of rubber.

That's not much in the way of engine redesign, really, but R&D got the chance to strut its techno-stuff in the chassis. Its proudest achievement is the Pro-Link single-shock rear suspension, a spin-off of the motocross concept debuted by Honda earlier this year. But aside from obviously having less wheel travel, this rising-rate suspension differs from the dirt version in that it uses an air-adjustable assist for its straight-rate coil spring. That gives the rebuildable shock itself a progressive rate which is further amplified at the rear wheel by the progressive action of the linkage on the lower shock mount.

Additionally, since seat height is more of a concern for street riders than dirt doers, the bottom linkage was configured to hang down below the aluminum swingarm, thus allowing a properly long shock to fit below a reasonably low seat. That simply wouldn't do on a motocrosser, which needs maximum vertical ground clearance; but on a street bike it's *cornering* clearance that's important, so the low-slung linkage causes no problems in that area.

Having a high-tech rear suspension warranted considerable chassis improvements elsewhere, including: two degrees more steering head angle and a two-inch-longer wheelbase; larger-diameter fork tubes (39mm vs. 35mm); wider wheel rims (2.50 vs. 2.15 inches up front, 2.75 vs. 2.50 at the rear, but with the same-size tires as last year); a wider fork-tube span to accommodate the front tire's spread-out sidewalls; and wheel hubs borrowed from Honda's CB900 series—the front from the CB900C and the rear from the CB900F.

Honda also borrowed some brake technology from the automotive field and equipped the CBX with a pair of ventilated disc rotors at the front wheel. Their purpose is to dissipate the heat of braking more rapidly; and they, along with the unventilated single rear disc, are pinched by Honda's exclusive new twin-piston calipers that improve stopping by positioning more puck surface closer to the outside edge of the disc, where it has a greater mechanical advantage on the wheel.

Honda's concern, obviously, was to give this 646-pound (plus payload) speedster adequate whoa-power for sporty riding. But the CBX acquired some of that extra heft because of those massive brake rotors and the bigger fork, as well as the added frame reinforcement needed to deal with the concentrated chassis stresses that accompany Pro-Link. Then credit over 25 pounds to the supersleek ABS plastic fairing and its attendant bracketry, and rack up 20 more for the detachable saddlebags and their high-quality hardware. Tack on a few pounds for the engine guards, and suddenly it's not too hard to figure out where all the extra weight came from.

It's also not hard to admire the way the Supersport looks, despite its massiveness. Like Honda's CX500 Turbo, the CBX has a wonderfully integrated look, as though it had been orchestrated by a single stylist rather than compromised by committee. The result is that even those who don't care for sport tourers in general, and huge motorcycles in particular, usually have to admit that *this* CBX, at least, is one of the most stunning machines they've ever seen.

—Paul Dean

Honda CBX

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Company, Inc.
100 W. Alondra Boulevard
Gardena, California 90247

CATEGORY: sport touring

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $5600 (approx)

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke transverse vertical six
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	64.5mm x 53.4mm
Displacement	1046.9cc
Compression ratio	9.3:1
Carburetion	six 28mm Keihin constant-velocity, with one accel. pump
Air filter	paper element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	battery/triple electronic pickups/triple coils
Charging system	12-volt; alternator, voltage regulator, rectifier

DRIVETRAIN

Clutch	wet, multi-plate
Crankshaft-to-jackshaft	Hy-vo chain; 1.000:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-transmission	straight-cut gears; 2.269:1 ratio
Final drive	#630 chain (¾-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 18/42, 2.333:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.44	12.91	6.1
II	1.75	9.26	8.5
III	1.39	7.36	10.6
IV	1.20	6.35	12.3
V	1.04	5.49	14.3

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	air/spring, 39mm stanchion tube diameter/6.6 in. (168mm)
Rear	air/spring Pro-Link, 3-way adjustable rebound damping/5.5 in. (140 mm)

BRAKES

Front	dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 11.6-in. (295mm) discs
Rear	single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.6-in. (295mm) disc

TIRES

Front	3.50V19 Dunlop Gold Seal F11
Rear	130/90V18 Dunlop Gold Seal K127

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

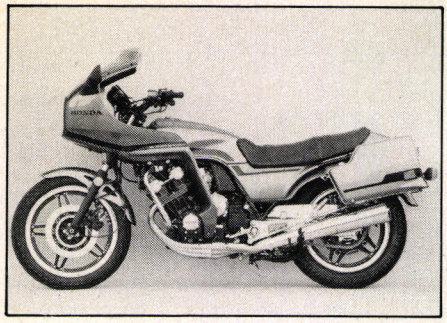
Weight	646 lbs. (293kg)
Weight distribution	47.1% front, 52.9% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	1050 lbs. (476kg)
Wheelbase	61.0 to 62.0 in. (1549 to 1575mm)
Seat height	32.0 in. (813mm)
Handlebar width	29.8 in. (757mm)
Footpeg height	13.3 in. (338mm)
Ground clearance	6.0 in. (152mm), at exhaust crossover
Steering head angle	29.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.7 in. (120mm)
Frame	tubular mild steel, no front downtubes
Oil capacity	5.8 qt. (5.5/)
Fuel tank	steel, 6.1 gal. (23.3/), including 1.3 gal. (4.8/) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, voltmeter

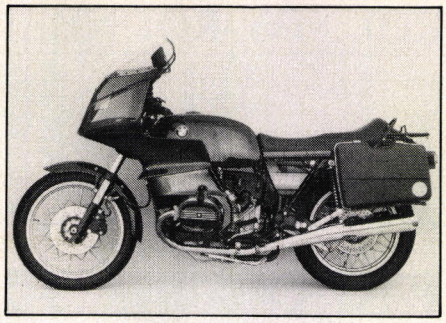
PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption	23 to 40 mpg (9.8 to 17.0 km/l)
Range, maximum	140 to 244 miles (225 to 393km)
Range, reserve only	29 to 50 miles (47 to 81km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated	31 mph actual
Speedometer error, 60 mph indicated	59 mph actual
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.008 sec., 113.92 mph (183 kph)
Top speed (calculated)	136 mph (218 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph	36 ft. (11m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	130 ft. (40m)

WARRANTY: 6 months/6000 miles

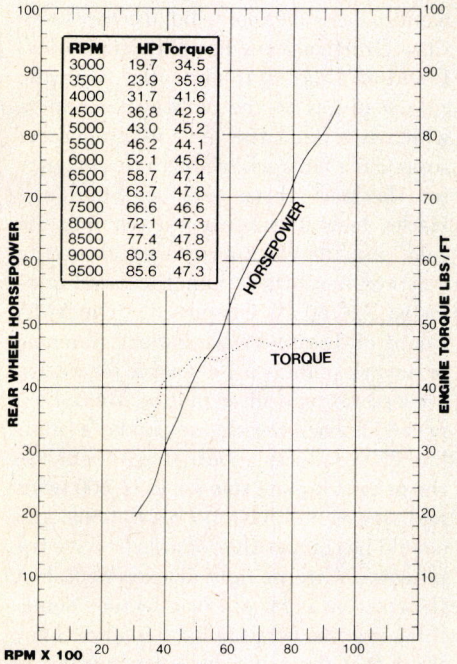
AVAILABLE COLOR: silver with black

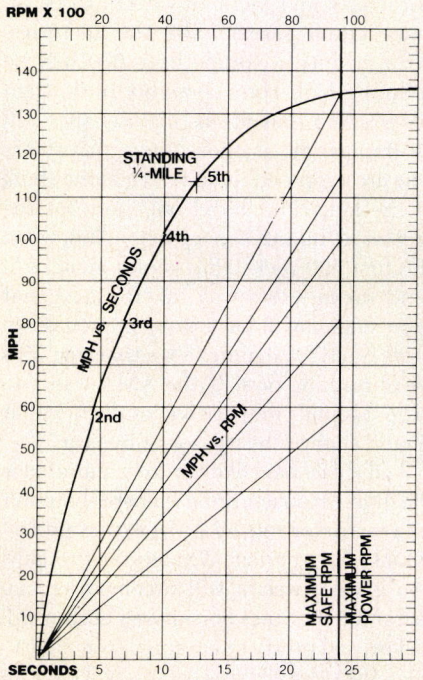




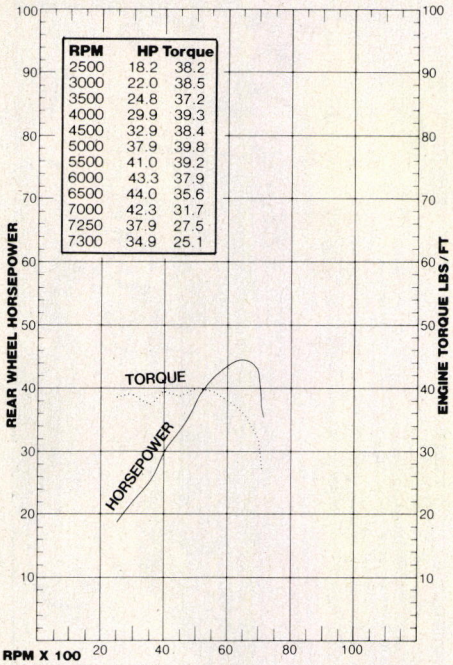
BMW R100RS

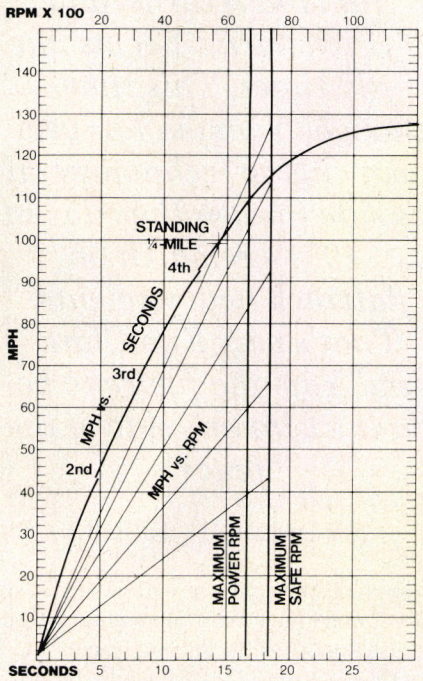
HONDA CBX





BMW R100RS





IMPORTER: BMW of North America, Inc.
Walnut and Hudson Streets
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

CATEGORY: Sport touring

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $7275 (as tested)

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke horizontally-opposed twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	94.0mm x 70.6mm
Displacement	979.9cc
Compression ratio	8.2:1
Carburetion	two 40mm Bing constant-velocity
Air filter	disposable paper element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	transistorized breakerless, single coil
Charging system	12-volt; alternator, voltage regulator, rectifier

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive	helical gears; 1.500:1 ratio
Clutch	dry, single-plate
Driveshaft-to-rear wheel	helical gears; 2.910:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.93	12.78	6.0
II	1.91	8.34	9.1
III	1.38	6.02	12.7
IV	1.11	4.85	15.7
V	1.00	4.37	17.4

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	36mm stanchion tube diameter/6.8 in. (173 mm)
Rear	3-way adjustable spring preload/5.3 in. (135 mm)

BRAKES

Front	dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 10.2-in. (260mm) disc
Rear	double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.2-in (260mm) disc

TIRES

Front	3.25H19 Continental RB2
Rear	4.00H18 Continental K112A

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight (as tested)	492 lbs. (223kg)
Weight distribution (as tested)	45.9% front, 54.1% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	881 lbs. (400 kg)
Wheelbase	58.5 in. (1486mm)
Seat height	32.0 in. (813mm)
Handlebar width	22.5 in. (572mm)
Footpeg height	12.3 in. (312mm)
Ground clearance	5.0 in. (127mm), at sidestand
Steering head angle	27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.74 in. (95mm)
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity	2.4 qt. (2.3/)
Fuel tank	steel, 6.3 gal. (23.8/), including 1.1 gal. (4.0/) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, voltmeter, clock

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption	34 to 52 mpg (14 to 25 km/l)
Range, maximum	214 to 328 miles (344 to 528km)
Range, reserve only	37 to 57 miles (60 to 92km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated	31 mph actual
Speedometer error, 60 mph indicated	59 mph actual
Best ¼-mile acceleration	13.483 sec., 98.36 mph (158kph)
Top speed (calculated)	127 mph (204 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph	35 ft. (11m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	145 ft. (44m)

WARRANTY: one year unlimited mileage

COLORS: Polaris Graphite metallic, Lava Red metallic

Just Like Old Times

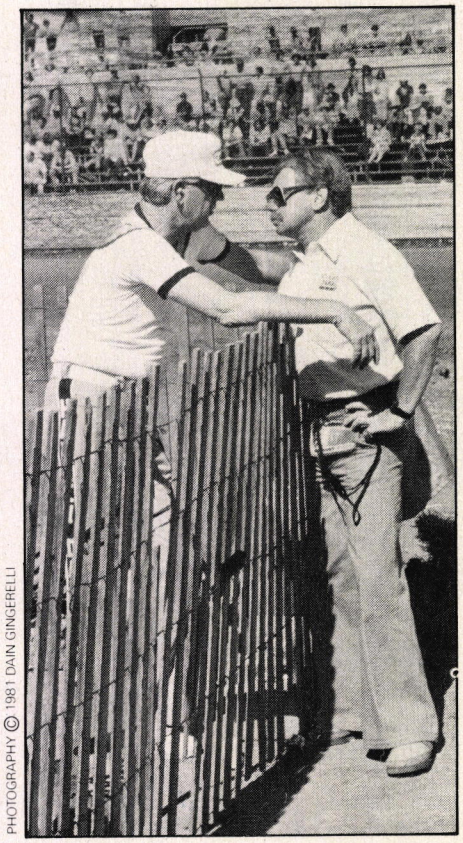
War clouds are gathering over American soil. Three years of AMA Class C detente is nearing an end, and once again Harley-Davidson's stranglehold on the roundy-rounds is being threatened by foreign forces. Yamaha is coming back, and not on Harley's terms, either.

Yamaha's weapon is the Virago, which became the immediate target of race-version rumors when it was unveiled last fall. "I knew when the dealers saw the 750 that they'd want to go dirttracking," recalls Yamaha race director Ken Clark. "The dealers wanted to get back in Class C more than anybody. And since we've become a bona fide vee-twin company, and dealer enthusiasm is so high, we're getting back into AMA Class C."

The Yamaha effort—the first since the OW72 and Roberts were withdrawn from the flattracks in 1977—reflects the company's newfound interest in America's ovals. But it won't be a full-on factory show. Instead, involvement will mostly be at the dealer level—as Clark puts it, "grassroots racing." At least for 1981, the major thrust will come from Roberts/Lawwill Racing—veteran expert Mike Kidd and first-year man Jim Filice. Kenny Roberts' and Mert Lawwill's forces will actually be fighting a guerrilla strategy, since only equipment—not money—will be supplied by Yamaha. The money necessary to sustain a campaign against Harley will come from as-yet-unnamed outside sources, which Kenny Roberts is helping to enlist.

Yamaha won't leave its shock troops stranded on the beach without support supplies, though. Clark indicates that there will be enough 750cc vee-twins sporting chain drive to keep every Yamaha dealer who wants to race equipped. "Yamaha will conduct R&D and get the engines AMA-approved," says Clark. "And we'll import as many engines as we need to supply Yamaha dealers interested in racing."

Meanwhile, Dick O'Brien and his forces await in the well-fortified Harley bunkers. And OB is aware of Yamaha's position at this point in the conflict: "They've got a lot of work to do this year. I'm sure most of the season will be spent learning about the engine more than winning races." No surprise, since even the street version is so new it won't have many more miles logged on its crank than the flattrack racer.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 DAIN GINGERELLI

Yamaha returns, and O'Brien burns. Seems like old times. This time, though, Yamaha has vee-twin engine technology on its side to even the odds in 1981's rematch of flattrack heavyweights. That's why Ken Clark and Yamaha figure to be on the winner's side of the fence.

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

O'Brien's placid mood might be misleading, because 1982 is when the warfare will intensify with the institution of the intake restrictor plate rule. The reason for the rule is to reduce the potency of the 750s, thus making 500s more competitive. Or so say the race insiders.

O'Brien feels differently. The new rule has also made it easier to build competitive Class C dirttrack engines. O'Brien, Harley-Davidson's race czar since 1957, feels the rule is unfair to the Milwaukee bunch, which has been the only manufacturer supporting flattrack racing in this country for the past three seasons. Suddenly, Harley feels it is being put out into the cold, and the rules have been altered to suit engines other than the tried-and-tested XR750. As OB puts it: "The AMA Board of Trustees have handed Yamaha, or anyone making a 750 engine for racing, horsepower on a silver platter. We can expect 60 horsepower engines (today's frontline 750 produces about 90 hp) thanks to the restrictor plate rule for 1982. 500 twins and singles will have no restrictions, and should be competitive, or at least have the potential with the right development. But the cost for a 500 will be a factor—something everybody has failed to realize. They think that the new rules, allowing 500s to be competitive with the 750s, will help reduce costs and allow privateers to be on more equal terms with the factories. Wrong, since a competitive 500 will be spinning high rpm—possibly more than 10,000. And that means maintenance will be important, as those same privateers who are supposed to be saving money will, in the long-run, shovel out more for the increased maintenance costs. And when the first 500 rocketship comes along, it'll send racing costs way up. Because that same engine will have to be broken down more often for maintenance than the 750s we're running now. If the AMA wants to keep racing competitive *and* cheap, it should change the rules year by year."

And a rule he'd like *not* to be initiated is the intake restrictor rule. "There shouldn't be a restrictor rule on AMA expert professional bikes, period. What's going to happen is rider weight will become a crucial factor for '82. Since horsepower output will be low, and pretty much equal from bike to bike, the rider who weighs less will have an advantage simply because of power-to-

weight ratio. What's going to eventually happen is we'll see racing that's not as close as it is now. This is the closest racing we've had in years."

Rules aside, though, OB anxiously awaits the Harley-Davidson/Yamaha confrontation. With two major brands, and Honda's involvement, spectator interest should be keen. And Yamaha's grassroots support allows dealers to sprinkle Winston Pro fields with local rider talent, something O'Brien feels is essential to the prosperity of Class C flattracking on the professional level.

More than spectator and rider interest, OB is concerned about locking horns with Yamaha once again. But on even terms. "We'll run even up against any company from any country in the world. But not on fixed rules, which is what we'll have for '82. That's selling this country down the river—and we've been sold, damn it!

"You welcome competition, but on even terms, not when they (AMA) give them an easy way to be competitive. And that's exactly what AMA did with Yamaha, slap a restrictor rule on 750s, and make their R&D easier." O'Brien's point is well taken because Harley, the only American motorcycle company involved with racing for the past 30 years, was faced with the same dilemma when the 750 flathead was making short order of British overhead-valve 500s a few years ago. O'Brien reflects back to when the cast-iron sidevalver was top banana on the ovals, and the AMA redid the rules in favor of OHV 750s. "I'm not saying the flathead shouldn't have been legislated out, but when it was pushed out of the picture by rules we were forced to design a new engine. And now, when the new 500s prove their potential, we'll have to do that again. And that takes money."

If OB and his boys seem to have a light order to fill for 1981, it's because the XR750 has proven time and time again to be the ideal engine for Class C flattracking. But he knows the honeymoon ends with the Ascot half-mile in October. Then begins the year—or possibly the era—of the restrictor plate. OB is preparing for the new diet: "It'll be duck soup for Yamaha in 1982. Thanks to the AMA Board of Trustees, anyone can build a competitive 750 engine. That's what Yamaha will do; but whoever finds additional horsepower will have to pay large sums of money for it. And in the middle of our factory-involved war, the privateers will be changing engines just to keep up with us—hell, they'll be changing 500cc engines like they change shoes."

Some call O'Brien reactionary, others say he's just plain hard-line Harley-Davidson—sort of a Reaganite of roundy-round. Maybe so, but OB knows racing. He's been in the business for 35 years, and has many stories to tell. Like of the days when Triumph, BSA, AJS and Norton filled the field with Harley. "We had some good rac-

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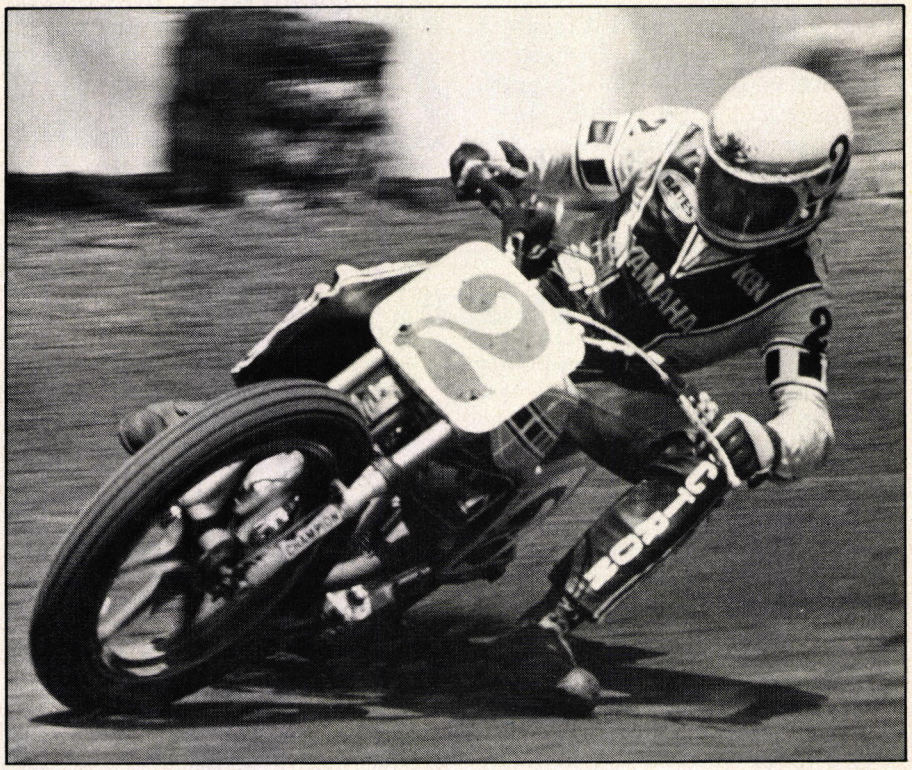
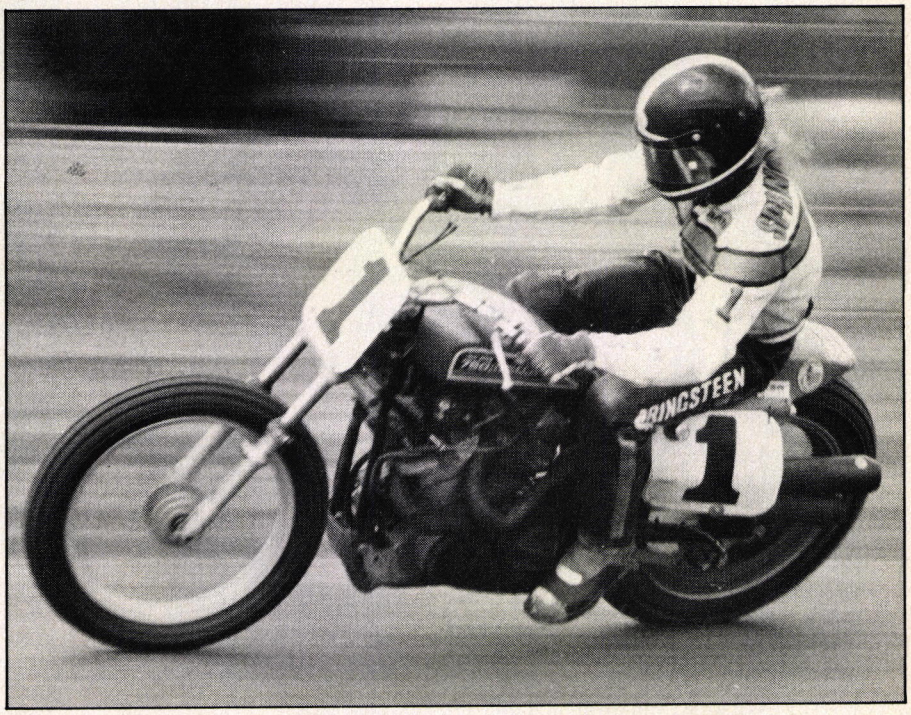


King Kenny aboard the discontinued OW72 vertical twin

Prepared to return to power—60 restricted horsepower—next year.



Three-time AMA champ Jay Springsteen on the high-line at San Jose—1977

He's healthy, hungry and ready to defend the Harley bunkers.

ing then, and it was because the rules didn't put restrictions on how we found the horsepower. But even then people wanted to change the rules. So we did."

O'Brien is willing to go back in time, at least for some new rules. Or even old ones. Almost in defeat, he recalls what Dick Mann once said about rules, " 'We need to change the rules back to what they were when we thought they were all screwed up.' Best goddamn quote I can think of at this time," says OB.

While OB reviews his military might for '81, and ponders the forecast holocaust of '82, Commander Clark peers through long lenses at tomorrow's Armageddon. While focusing on the battlefield, he discusses future strategy: "Maybe somewhere down the road a team effort waits. But not now." That somewhere down the road could be 1982. Because that's when King Kenny will probably hang up his roadrace leathers—at least his European skins—and return to the clay tracks of America. And more toward the bottom line, 1982 is the year racing budgets can be slashed while the teams still remain competitive. Because the only equipment you'll need then is a raceworthy 750cc vee-twin and a restrictor plate. The rest, some say, is duck soup. •

Tuner Bill Werner and The Springer

The one-two Milwaukee Punch.

Duck Soup Entree

• Yamaha's Class C gourmet chef is Mert Lawwill. Lawwill, you'll recall, was the defending 1970 AMA Grand National champ who rode for Harley-Davidson and spent almost the entire film footage of Bruce Brown's *On Any Sunday* fixing broken parts and dodging bad luck.

Lawwill figures bad luck won't be with him in the Yamaha kitchen. As new head chef, he was one of the first to open the Virago package and see what ingredients await the Class C entree. When all the hardware was exposed, Lawwill was more than impressed. As he describes the engine prior to initial R&D: "It's basic overkill, probably in the interest of engine noise, since there's plenty of metal in there."

But noise abatement doesn't concern Lawwill and his partner Kenny Roberts, who comprise Roberts/Lawwill Racing. Horsepower and reliability do. Lawwill asserts the Virago plant has the prime ingredients for a vee-twin flattrack engine: A set of plain bearings supporting a heavy crankshaft. Lawwill's initial worry was that the crank would be too light, a problem that plagued the XS650 vertical twin during its entire career on the roundy-rounds in the Seventies.

Lawwill has enlisted the services of C.R. Axtell and Mike Libby for help in engine development. Both those men feel the Virago's cylinder heads have good breathing capacity for racing. The major hurdle appears in obtaining proper induction length from the 38mm Dell Orto carbs to the intake ports. Lawwill and chassis/frame attendant Dick "Bugsy" Mann plan on tucking the carbs under the frame's backbone and between the cylinders.

Bugsy and Lawwill will surround the engine with 4130 chromoly tubing, using the frame's backbone for central strength. Two downtubes lead directly to the Lawwill Lugs but don't sweep beneath the engine, so ground clearance isn't compromised. With this design, the overall height is about the same as the XR750's.

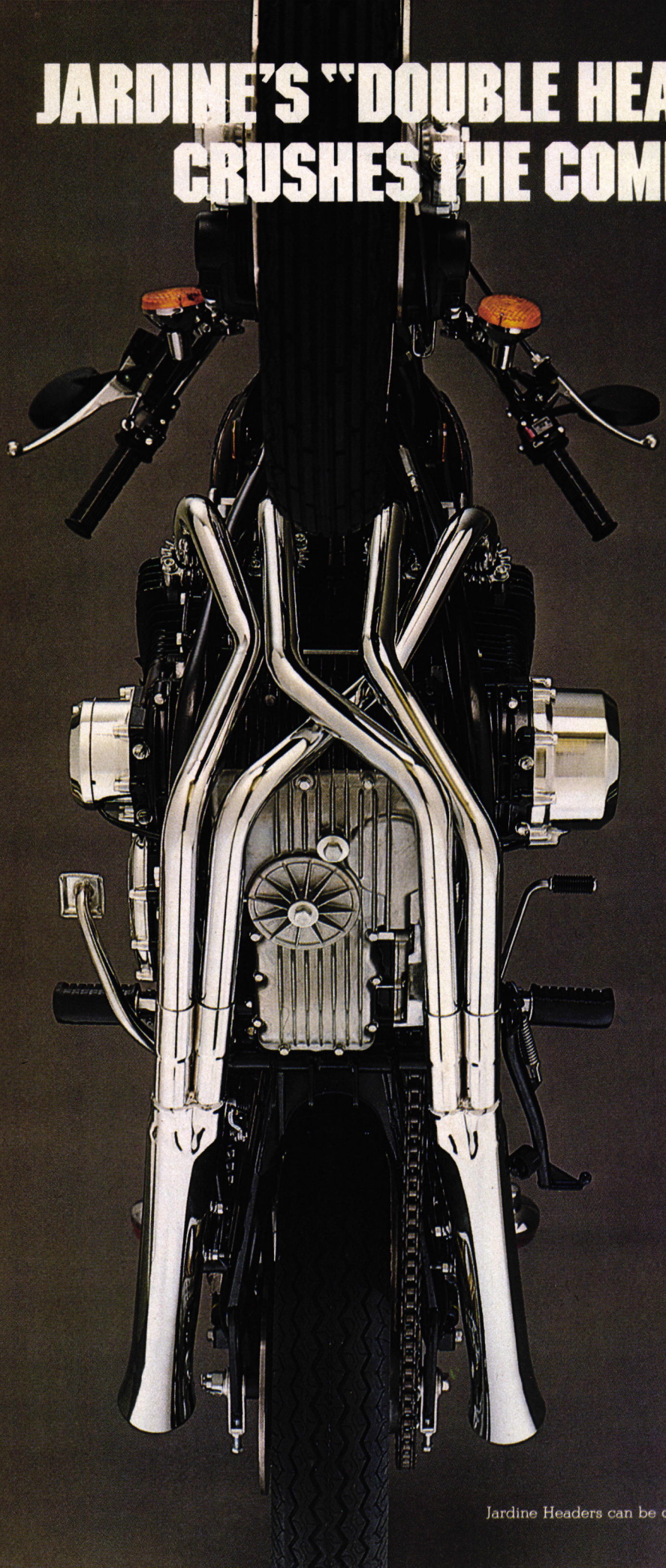
And when Lawwill talks of the impending XR750/XV750 confrontation, he says this: "We're going to be competitive with the XR750. But if we don't catch up with the Harleys by the end of the season, the restrictor plate rule will be the equalizer for 1982." Like any successful gourmet chef, Lawwill has more than one recipe for his main entree. —*Dain Gingerelli*

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 PATRICK BEHAR

Mert Lawwill with Lynn Griffis and troopers Kidd and Filice

Sitting ducks this year, but just wait for 1982.

JARDINE'S "DOUBLE HEADER" SYSTEM CRUSHES THE COMPETITION.



We at Jardine have built our 22 year reputation on horsepower and quality. To test our reputation, we thought it would be exciting to run our new "Double Header" 4 into 2 system against the best of our competitors' 4 into 1 systems—"heads up"—at the dragstrip. The results were amazing!

We used a new, fuel injected Kawasaki Z-1 Classic as the test bike and, after some minor tuning*, we produced a baseline time of 11.97 seconds at 111.51 MPH-stock. We then bolted up the systems, one at a time, and made five passes with each system. The best times are as follows:

JARDINE "DOUBLE HEADER"	**11.54 sec @ 117.89 MPH**
Brand "K"	11.61 sec @ 116.60 MPH
Brand "R"	11.68 sec @ 114.32 MPH
Brand "W"	11.72 sec @ 113.58 MPH

Lastly, just for comparison, we ran our own 4 into 1 at 11.44 sec and 119.04 MPH—that's PERFORMANCE!

The "Double Header" system features a high velocity 180° firing design for excellent smoothness and throttle response, as well as a balanced look to your machine. The exhaust note is crisp, yet mellow to the ear, and the styling is Jardine sharp. Another plus—our individual pipe design means a better finish and inexpensive repairs if you damage just one tube—you don't have to buy the whole header.

Horsepower and quality—that's Jardine!

*All test machines are prepared and ridden by professionals, using proper safety equipment. Documentation and tuning specs are available upon request.

Jardine

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GARDEN GROVE, CA 92641
(714) 893-7594

Jardine Headers can be ordered by direct mail. Phone toll free 800-854-1877.

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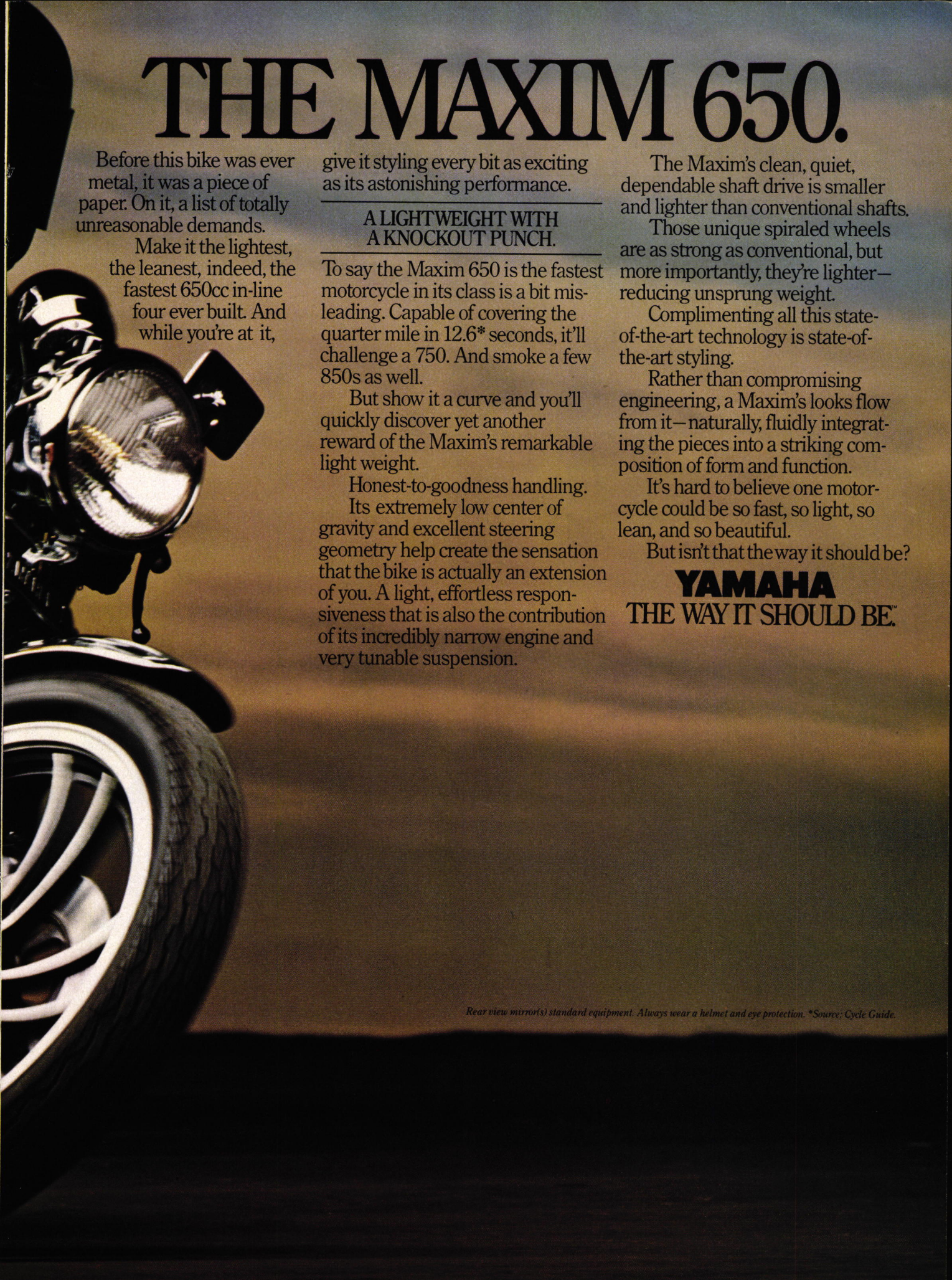
IF YOU CAN'T DECIDE BETWEEN LOOKS AND PERFORMANCE, DON'T.



THE MAXIM 650.

Before this bike was ever metal, it was a piece of paper. On it, a list of totally unreasonable demands.

Make it the lightest, the leanest, indeed, the fastest 650cc in-line four ever built. And while you're at it, give it styling every bit as exciting as its astonishing performance.

A LIGHTWEIGHT WITH A KNOCKOUT PUNCH.

To say the Maxim 650 is the fastest motorcycle in its class is a bit misleading. Capable of covering the quarter mile in 12.6* seconds, it'll challenge a 750. And smoke a few 850s as well.

But show it a curve and you'll quickly discover yet another reward of the Maxim's remarkable light weight.

Honest-to-goodness handling.

Its extremely low center of gravity and excellent steering geometry help create the sensation that the bike is actually an extension of you. A light, effortless responsiveness that is also the contribution of its incredibly narrow engine and very tunable suspension.

The Maxim's clean, quiet, dependable shaft drive is smaller and lighter than conventional shafts.

Those unique spiraled wheels are as strong as conventional, but more importantly, they're lighter—reducing unsprung weight.

Complimenting all this state-of-the-art technology is state-of-the-art styling.

Rather than compromising engineering, a Maxim's looks flow from it—naturally, fluidly integrating the pieces into a striking composition of form and function.

It's hard to believe one motorcycle could be so fast, so light, so lean, and so beautiful.

But isn't that the way it should be?

YAMAHA

THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.™

*Rear view mirror(s) standard equipment. Always wear a helmet and eye protection. *Source: Cycle Guide.*

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Compensator Cruise Control

Making speed a constant companion.

• You either love gadgets or you hate them. There is no middle ground when it comes to clocks, gauges and radios on motorcycles. And if you side with the group that winces at the thought of two-wheeled stereo, you probably hate the idea of a cruise control. After all, cruise controls personify the four-wheeled excess that motorcyclists are trying to escape.

The fact that Graham Sheet Metal's Compensator Cruise Control is adapted directly from a car component may heighten your dislike of the concept. Don't let it. I, too, was sceptical about letting an electronic brain regulate my motorcycle, but I am now ready to change my mind. After trying one of the first *real* cruise controls for motorcycles, I am convinced that they have their own niche in the two-wheeled marketplace.

If your only experience with throttle controls is a simple friction lock, I can assure you that the Compensator offers—and does—a lot more. Indeed, for $175 you would expect to get just that. Rather than holding a constant throttle opening, the Compensator maintains a steady road speed, just like the units used in four-wheeled behemoths.

You control the Compensator with a compact plastic switch that would normally mount on the turnsignal lever of a car. For a motorcycle, GSM provides a rather crude metal bracket that simply bolts to the left-hand mirror mount on the handlebars. In this position, a twist of the wrist will bring your fingers in contact with an On/Off/Resume switch and a small button at the end of the unit to set the desired cruising speed.

Even a heavily gloved hand can operate the switch, sending electronic signals through a multitude of wires to the system's microcomputer. Still other circuits run from the computer to a magnetic switch mounted on the fork leg, which measures the speed of small magnets attached beneath the brake rotor mounting bolts.

The system can now monitor how fast your bike is traveling, and it only calls for you to punch in the speed you desire. The Compensator will only operate above 45mph, but at that speed you can set the unit by pushing in the large button on the end of the switchbox. The cruise control takes over immediately, opening and closing the throttle by means of a servo unit powered by engine intake vacuum.

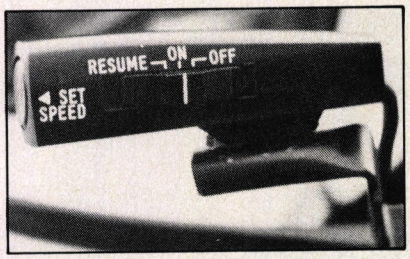
Graham Sheet Metal claims that the Compensator will maintain a set speed to within 2mph. If it does not, the microcomputer has three small potentiometers to adjust its sensitivity. And when correctly set, our Honda Gold Wing testbed did indeed stay within a couple of miles per hour of the desired speed.

When you want to regain control of your cruise missile you can either turn the unit off at the switchbox or simply touch the brakes. Either action returns the bike to manual control. To resume cruise control there's no need to reset the Compensator, for the computer actually recalls the last speed entered into its memory. Flicking the switch to the "Resume" position will bring your bike back to its last entered speed without fuss.

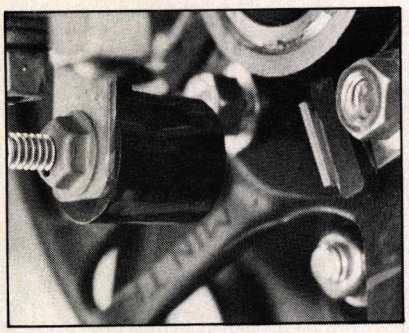
All these novel features do, of course, have some drawbacks, not the least of which are the size and complexity of the package. The present unit, suitable for larger Suzuki, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Honda GL models, can only be fitted in the cavernous recesses of a fairing. Installation, too, is more than a 10-minute job. You had better set aside a day to mount and adjust the unit to your bike.

A less-bulky Compensator, to fit unfaired bikes, will be available from GSM by the end of this year. We're looking forward to testing that more-universal unit, because not only can a cruise control save your aching wrist, it can even save you money. Set at 55mph, a cruise control could save you a fortune in speeding tickets—not to mention gasoline. That would make the initial high cost of the unit (from Graham Sheet Metal, 13026 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, Calif. 91605) seem quite a bargain. And it might even interest a few gadget-haters out there.

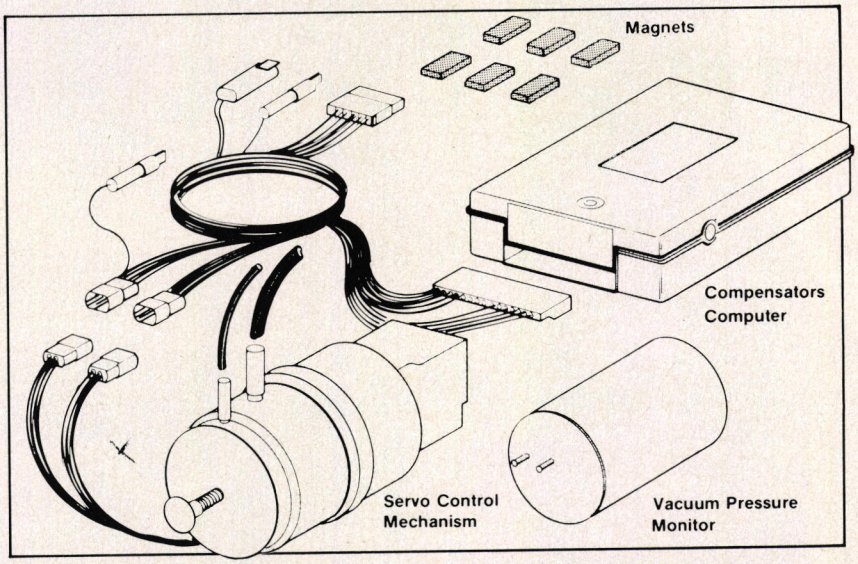
—David Dewhurst



Setting speed at the flick of a switch



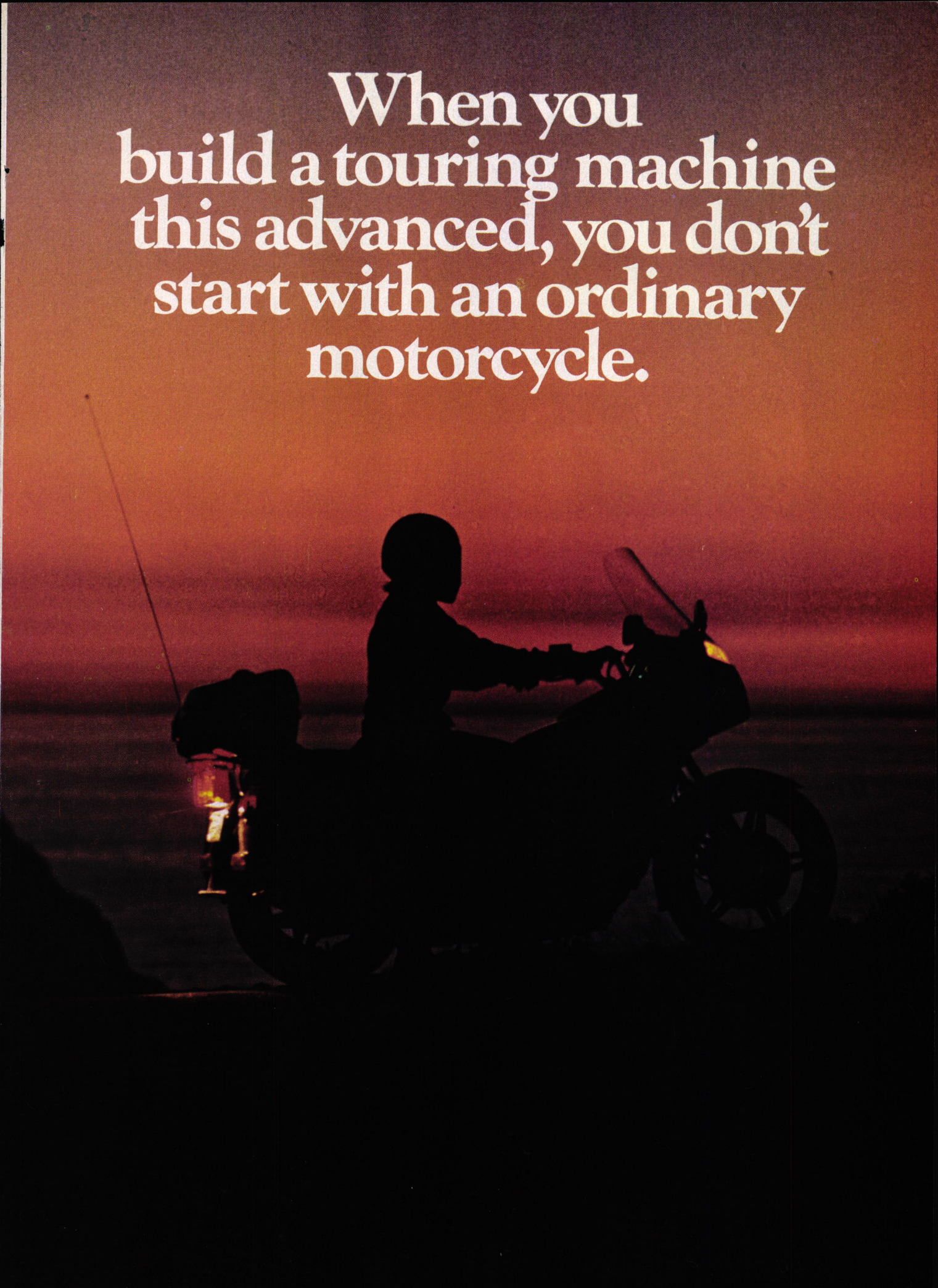
Cruising along on a magnetic heading.



The Compensator's servo muscle is controlled by a complex computerized brain

High technology finally takes over from the traditional friction lock.

When you build a touring machine this advanced, you don't start with an ordinary motorcycle.

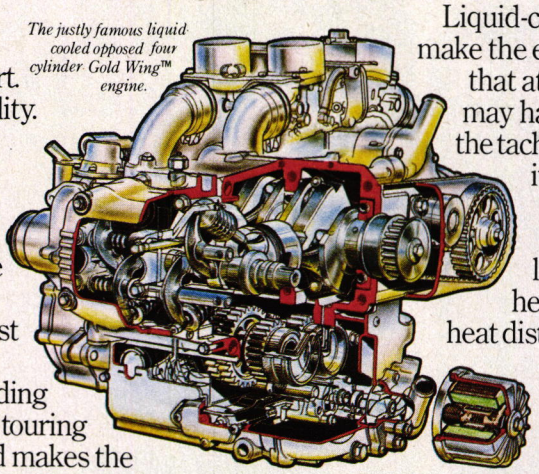


Ride a legend in your own time.

Over the years the legendary Honda Gold Wing™ has acquired quite a reputation among touring riders.

For quiet.
For comfort.
For reliability.
For performance.
For everything, in fact, that defines the difference between riding just any touring machine and riding the standard of touring excellence. And makes the Honda Gold Wing America's number one touring motorcycle.

Whether the tour is from town to town. Or country to country.



The justly famous liquid cooled opposed four cylinder Gold Wing™ engine.

How an engine so strong can be so smooth.

Highway speeds and heavy loads require more than mere power from an engine. They require smooth, controllable power.

Smooth, clean shaft drive system gets more power to the road.

Power that exists throughout a wide rpm range. Power that is quiet enough to make your trip a tour, not a torture.

The Gold Wing engine is a liquid-cooled overhead cam four specifically designed for long distance riding.

The four cylinders are in an opposed configuration. For smoothness. The crankshaft is parallel with the drive shaft. So only one change in power-flow is necessary from the engine to the rear wheel. More power gets to the road.

Liquid-cooling helps make the engine so quiet that at idle you may have to check the tach to make sure it's running.

And even more important, liquid-cooling helps to reduce heat distortion in the engine which in turn prolongs maintenance intervals.

And the crankshaft mounted transistorized ignition with vacuum advance should never need maintenance at all.

If you feel like you're riding on air, it's because you are.

In front, large diameter, air assisted forks with dual low friction Syntallic™ bushings. In the rear, VHD™ air-adjustable shocks with a convenient equalizing system. And more adjustability than ever before.

Lightweight aluminum ComStar™ wheels are fitted with wide profile, cool running tubeless tires.

And between you and the machine itself is a plush dual saddle which adjusts fore and aft for the most comfortable riding position.

A list of features almost as long as the list of Gold Wing™ owners.

The Gold Wing didn't become the country's premier touring bike by skimping on features.

It comes with full instrumentation, for example. With a tastefully designed panel and glowing translucent dial faces.

Air shocks with equalizer system are more adjustable than ever.

The 5.3 gallon long range tank is mounted beneath the seat to keep the center of gravity low. And that opens up a storage pod where the fuel tank is on most bikes.

The brakes are three big discs. Two in front, one in back.

And of course there's a massive array of optional accessories designed by Honda for the the Honda Gold Wing. Accessories that complement its performance as well as its looks. So you can add a fairing, saddlebags — whatever you need to complete your touring machine.

Gentlemen, start your legends.

You've read about the Gold Wing. Talked about it. Probably even dreamed of the day you would own one.

So how about it?

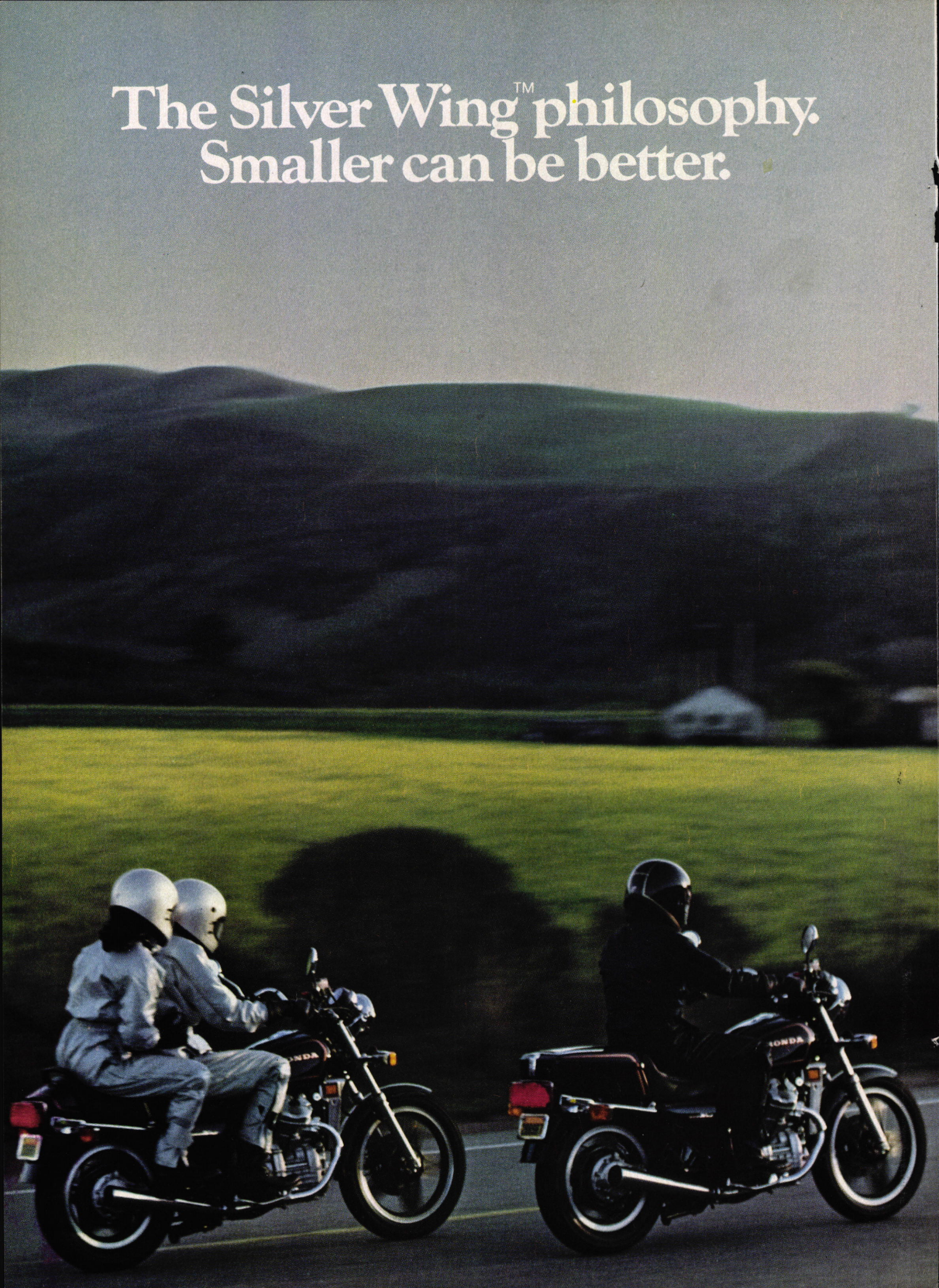
Is this your year?

The answer, chromed and polished and fairly bursting to be set free on the highway, awaits you at your Honda dealer.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

The Silver Wing™ philosophy. Smaller can be better.



As a touring rider you may have asked yourself if a touring motorcycle has to be big to be good. Many of you have asked Honda that same question.

Here is your answer.

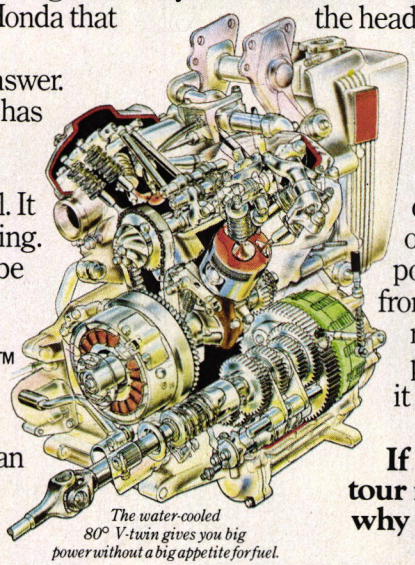
A touring bike has to be comfortable. It has to be reliable. It has to be powerful. It has to be smooth riding.

But it can also be small.

Take the new Honda Silver Wing™ for example.

It is smaller, lighter and lower than most touring bikes. Without sacrificing the features you've come to appreciate on the larger bikes.

How? Read on.

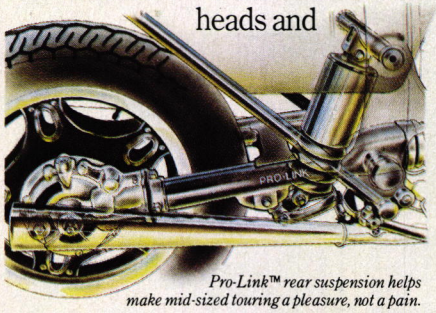


The water-cooled 80° V-twin gives you big power without a big appetite for fuel.

Size isn't everything.

Take the Silver Wing's liquid-cooled engine, for example.

It's an 80° V-twin with Pentroof™ heads and four valves per cylinder. So it packs plenty of power.



Pro-Link™ rear suspension helps make mid-sized touring a pleasure, not a pain.

It's thermostatically liquid-cooled. For more consistent temperature, less wear. And less engine noise. Plus it has transistorized ignition, for less maintenance.

The cylinder heads are offset 22° from the crankshaft centerline which places the 34 mm CV carbs under the fuel tank and allows straight line gas flow to the head.

And the engine itself is mounted in the motorcycle so that the crankshaft is parallel to the final drive shaft. There is only one change of powerflow direction from the engine to the rear wheel, so less power gets lost before it can do some good.

If you can't tour in comfort, why tour at all?

Honda has taken some unprecedented steps to ensure a smooth and easy ride on the Silver Wing.

The Pro-Link™ rear suspension system, for instance.

A single air-adjustable shock mounted to a unique linkage which allows spring and damping rates to be truly progressive. Light rates for small road irregularities. Heavier rates for bigger bumps.

A more comfortable ride regardless of the road surface.

In front are air-adjustable forks with friction reducing Syntallic™ bushings and a pressure equalizer.

And in between, a big, comfortable saddle slung only 31 inches off the ground. So even shorter riders can touch down both feet at stops.

A place for your friend. Or your lunch.

See the small travel trunk?

It slips right on the Silver Wing where the passenger seat usually is. So when your tour includes taking something extra along, there's room for it.

When your tour includes taking someone else along, the trunk detaches in seconds, to be replaced by the passenger seat again.

The standard small trunk is interchangeable with the standard detachable passenger seat for solo touring. An optional larger lockable trunk is also available to give you even more carrying capacity.

Pretty neat, right? But the best part is that the interchangeable seat and small trunk are standard equipment. And an even larger lockable trunk is an option to give you even more carrying capacity. Honda also has many other options available for the Silver Wing, including a frame-mounted fairing and color-coordinated saddlebags.

Everything you want in a touring bike. And less.

Think of it as touring on a diet. Light weight. Only 456.4 pounds dry. Low seat height. Good gas mileage.

Less of almost everything. Except the one thing you buy a touring bike for. Comfort.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

No touring motorcycles
have ever gone this far before.

The Honda Gold Wing™ has become the standard of excellence in touring motorcycles.

The Honda Silver Wing™ has opened up a whole new world of mid-sized touring.

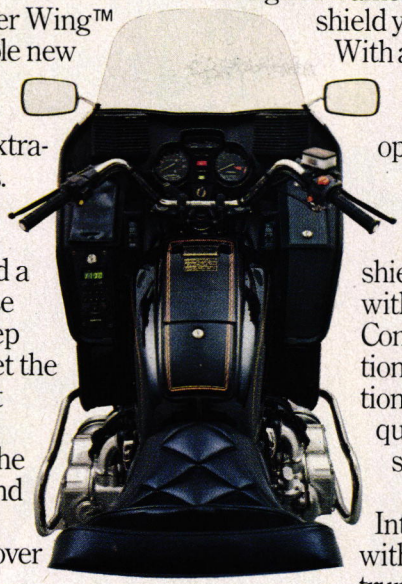
Both are truly extraordinary motorcycles.

But that's not enough.

Honda has found a way to take both these fine machines one step further. A way to meet the requirements of most serious and exacting touring riders. With the addition of features and equipment asked for by countless owners over the years.

Interstate.™

Probably the most complete touring motorcycles ever produced. And the final step up in touring sophistication.



The Interstate™ fairing features everything short of the kitchen radio. And that's optional.

Gold Wing™ Interstate.™ The ultimate open class touring machine.

The Gold Wing Interstate is the open class champion of the world.

Its silken smooth 1085 cc powerplant is thermostatically liquid-cooled for quietness and reliability. It features clean, low maintenance shaft drive. Powerful disc brakes. And the smoothest riding air suspension short of a cloud.

It is, in short, a Gold Wing.

Or at least that's where it begins.

From there add a Honda designed frame-mounted fairing to shield you from the elements.

With a lockable storage compartment on one side and an easy open one on the other.

A height adjustable scratch resistant polycarbonate windshield. Integral air scoops with adjustable vents.

Complete instrumentation. And even an optional quartz clock and quick detach signal seeking digital radio.

The Gold Wing Interstate also comes with a detachable travel trunk large enough to hold two full coverage helmets. And lockable saddlebags with integral turn signal assemblies and removable liners.

All color matched to the machine. And all designed to complement handling and performance, not interfere with them.

The large Silver Wing™ travel trunk is both detachable and standard. A smaller trunk is optional.

Silver Wing™ Interstate.™ The most complete middleweight touring bike ever built.

When you move from a larger bike to a smaller one, you might expect to have to give up some of the amenities you'd otherwise enjoy.

Not with the Honda Silver Wing Interstate.

It comes standard with the same fully equipped fairing you get on a Gold Wing Interstate. Optional instrumentation and radio are available.

It comes with a detachable travel trunk large enough to hold a helmet (a smaller trunk is optional). And detachable saddlebags.

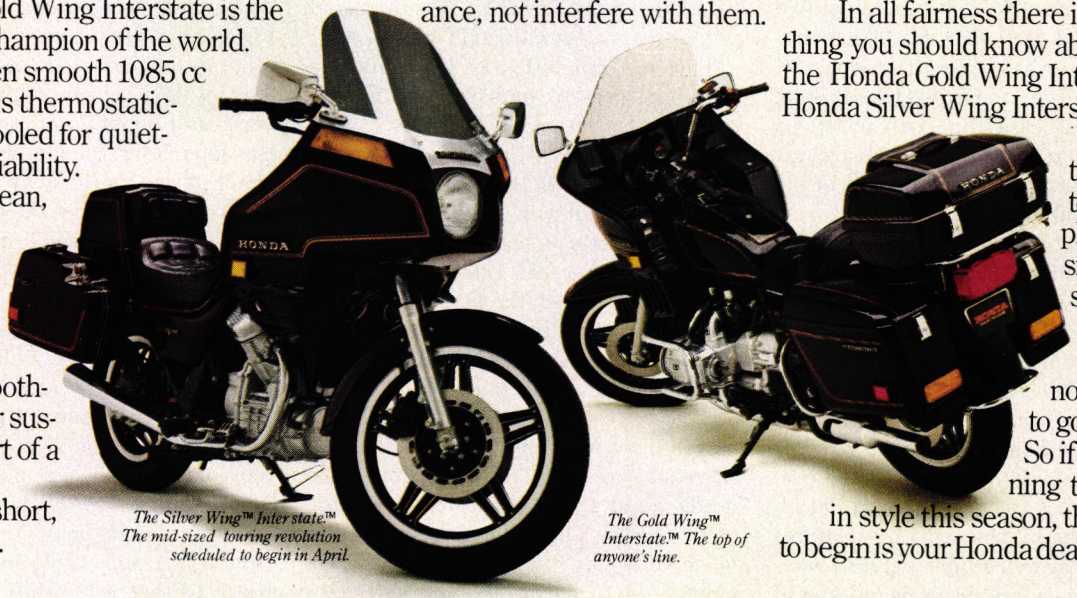
All color-coordinated and designed to add to your enjoyment of this Pro-Link™ suspension equipped, mid-sized touring machine.

The line forms at the rear.

In all fairness there is one more thing you should know about the Honda Gold Wing Interstate and Honda Silver Wing Interstate.

Because they are so totally complete as they sit on the showroom floor, there simply may not be enough to go around.

So if you're planning to go touring in style this season, the best place to begin is your Honda dealer.



The Silver Wing™ Interstate.™ The mid-sized touring revolution scheduled to begin in April.

The Gold Wing™ Interstate.™ The top of anyone's line.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice.
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Or write: American Honda Motor Co., Inc., Dept. 555, Box 9000, Van Nuys, California 91409.

TRAIL TEST:

Yamaha IT465H Enduro

A powerful way to make winning a dirty habit.

BY DAVID DEWHURST

Obviously, Yamaha has never taken its enduro bikes too seriously. Not, that is, until the IT465. Earlier ITs all were very capable motorcycles, but they never came as close to the leading edge of dirt-bike technology as the 465. Indeed, ITs traditionally were assembled from old or outdated YZ motocross parts. They were, in fact, more like low-buck models: good enduros, but even better playbikes.

This year's IT465 is still a dynamite playbike, for it has even more docile power than last year's 425 and a more useable chassis as well. But what this IT has that the others never had is a more serious side. When the trail gets tough and time is short the IT can shift easily from play to serious mode. It only takes a more aggressive riding style to turn the IT465 into one of the best enduro bikes money can buy.

One reason the IT is more serious is because Yamaha is no longer bolting together old motocross technology. Instead, the IT465 utilized Yamaha's latest off-road designs to make it more like a YZ than any previous model.

Everywhere you look, the IT has undergone major or minor changes to make it more formidable. From the updated suspension and YZ frame to a quick-detach front light, the IT has expensive features that help it stay well inside its enduro minute. And with its awe-inspiring monster of a motor, the IT465 has the right amount of power for every occasion, no matter if you're plonking along a hillside trail or blasting down a dusty fireroad. It can, if you wish, be so blisteringly fast that you'll swear you're on a YZ; but thanks to revised motocross porting and a new exhaust, the 465 also serves as a forgiving playbike. The old 425 motor never worked so perfectly at both these extremes of performance, which is why so many serious riders chose to modify last year's big YZ to enduro trim rather than battle with an IT425.

That was fine last year, but without a wide-ratio gearbox and the new exhaust system, a converted YZ could never be a match for the IT465. Sheer size alone would seem to make the new engine better than the 425, but with a stroke that's a full seven millimeters longer, the motor has a totally different feel. Like the YZ from which it was cloned, the IT has an unhurried, almost effortless feel to it. There is no real need to rev the motor very high, and even less need to shift gears very often.

That's because the first signs of usable power show up about the time the first signs of noise come rumbling out of the muffler, and it just gets better from that point onward. The motor actually behaves like a latter-day four-stroke in that it will plonk down to idle like the biggest thumpers and then rev to the limit like a two-stroke motocrosser. And in between these extremes the Yamaha has a torque curve as flat as the desert to which the old 425 was so perfectly suited. Open the throttle and you feel as if you've been fired from an enormous catapult. It's as though uncovering the Mikuni's 38mm venturi releases a giant rubber band that launches you forward in a smooth but sudden rush.

No mechanical tricks account for this amazing spread of power. Yamaha has simply taken its latest motocross technology and carefully adapted it to enduro use. A look inside the engine might even convince you that it is identical to the YZ. Certainly the outer cases, cylinder and head are unchanged, and there's not even a heavier ignition flywheel for a smoother spread of power. But a few small internal changes make all the difference.

Lowering the top edge of the exhaust port by 2mm and narrowing the transfers by the same amount accounts for the main horsepower shift. And a lengthier intake skirt gives the enduro's piston a longer service life than the YZ's. Yamaha also employed a longer header pipe and a larger-volume expansion chamber to improve low-speed performance. Back-pressure from a non-repackable silencer/spark arrestor further helps shift the power emphasis to the middle and lower end of the rpm scale.

As a result of these changes, the woods racer develops its power peak 500 rpm lower than the YZ motocrosser. But more importantly, even though the IT generates fractionally less peak horsepower than the YZ, its peak torque barely changes over a 2500-rpm spread while the YZ's torque

peaks out rather abruptly.

To make the best use of this new stump-pulling power, Yamaha has fitted wider gear ratios for enduro use. First gear is lower than the YZ's, and its use is mandatory only when you play observed trials games. Second and third are retained from the YZ, while fourth and fifth are new, taller gears for fast fireroading. Combined with its smaller rear sprocket, the IT465 was able to plonk along like a true trials bike and still scream up to 88 mph.

For most enduros you won't need that sort of speed. Chances are, you won't use first or second gears much, either. The gearbox is a little imprecise and notchy anyway, so it's probably good that third and fourth gears handle almost any situation. Having such a wide power spread makes the IT almost like an automatic, and that is what makes it such a pleasant playbike as well as a good enduro mount. You simply snick into third gear and forget about everything but the trail ahead. You can bounce along rocky stream beds and climb almost impossible hills in third gear without rowing the shift lever or bogging the motor. The flat torque curve lets the revs drop until you can count the power pulses through the rubber-mounted handlebars. And when the trail opens out, you can use the motor right up to its 8000-rpm redline. You will, admittedly, feel it tingle through the high-mounted footpegs, but vibration is not a real problem with the IT. You always know it's there, but it is only bad when you first pump the cold motor into life with the awkward kickstarter. As it burbles alive on its rich mixture, the 465 shakes like a jackhammer, but once cleared out the vibes are held at an acceptable level.

Yamaha broke with Japanese tradition to insure that all the IT's amazing power could be used. The designers opted for a massive 17-inch IRC rear tire which, combined with a conventional IRC up front, gave exceptional straight-line stability.

Serious new suspension also helps keep the power hooked up to the ground. The enormous rear wheel is controlled by a 1981 YZ monoshock modified by an internal spacer that limits wheel travel to 11.4 inches. Damping is also altered for enduro use, with softer settings and a full 28 usable adjustment positions. Spring rate is changed, too, with a softer initial rate, but surprisingly, the IT's progressively wound spring has a higher final rate than the YZ's.

IT and YZ also differ at the front, where the only obvious cost-cutting on the IT shows up. It uses last year's 38mm motocross fork instead of the new 43mm units. Yet, when the fork was set to factory specifications with stock oil and no air, the front end was plush. The response on little bumps was very smooth indeed, and the fork rarely bottomed. In fact, the equally plush rear end often bottomed at the same time as the front over big, rolling whoops. However, both ends always reached full compression with a hydraulic thud rather than a harsh metallic clang.

Yamaha seems to have bracketed the ideal rear-suspension settings perfectly with its 28 damping adjustments. Our 180-pound tester used the stock spring preload and the damping set eight clicks from the hardest setting. That leaves lighter riders with enough damping and spring preload adjustments to suit almost any situation.

There are no areas where the IT suspension really falls short. Not even the older fork is overtaxed by large rocks or tree

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 TOM RILES

stumps. And almost 12 inches of ground clearance lets the Yamaha glide over most obstacles easily. The only problem we *did* have in gnarly sections was with the exhaust system. The header pipe has a curious routing that pokes it way out to the right of the motorcycle. And while it doesn't stick down as far as the old 425 version, it's more vulnerable. The first big rock it went over left a deep ding in the pipe, and a number of other boulders just made the situation worse. There appears to be no way of rerouting the pipe in its present form, so it might just be that regular exhaust repairs are the price for such a broad spread of power.

The rest of the motor is better protected from damage. Like Husqvarna, Yamaha

Searching for Gold

• You might not be aiming for an ISDE gold medal, but it is possible to create a replica of the IT465 that did just that in France last year. Obtaining the racer's edge that helped Team Yamaha rider Larry Roeseler finish as Top American at Six Days 1980 is surprisingly easy—and it might also help you win a local enduro.

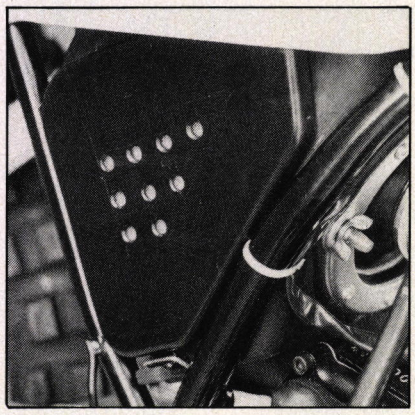
Unlike its exotic works motocross cousins, Team Yamaha's enduro mounts are near-stock bikes that can be race-tuned fairly simply. They use no exotic metals, no special frames and no monster motors—other than the one supplied with every IT465. The factory "edge" comes from careful preparation and an intimate knowledge of the machine.

"We really don't do anything special at all, or at least nothing that any average rider could not do," explains Team Yamaha rider John Fero. The single most expensive change that any Yamaha factory rider makes is to replace the 38mm fork with a new 43mm unit from the latest YZ465. The bigger fork is more rigid and has a more progressive action, but because it is made for motocross the damper rods need to be changed for units more suited to enduro competition.

For most enduros the team does not even use the full motocross travel. Instead, a longer rebound spring allows retention of stock wheel travel. But if you can't afford this expensive luxury, it probably won't matter: Fero admits that the stock fork works fine for most riders. "Just take time to set up the suspension and don't be afraid to go outside the recommended settings in the owner's manual," he says.

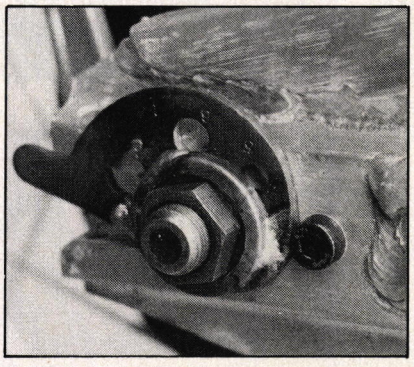
One thing to avoid, however, is using air in the fork. Air pressure will make the ride harsh, so Fero suggests increasing the oil level if the fork bottoms too often. If you want the longer YZ fork travel, you will also need to adjust the rear suspension by removing the internal travel limiter in the monoshock and adding a short external spring from an E-model IT.

You won't need to make any changes to the motor internals, though. Even the factory team uses stock engines, relying on careful inspection during assembly and little else. One thing the team does avoid is the use of Loctite, because it can be a problem when emergency repairs are needed in the woods. Loctite is only used on the spoke nipples to avoid collapsed wheels.



Foam covered holes in the airbox cover

A breath of fresh air in the dry.



Welded washer helps retain the pieces

Little details can save a lot of time.

Yamaha team riders use locking wire to secure things, including an inline gas filter and a replacement folding brake pedal. The stock pedal is replaced on the race bikes by an aftermarket unit that is wired to the chassis to prevent branches from snagging against the motor. Aside from otherwise normal enduro preparation, the only unusual change is to add 6mm to the clutch actuating arm to ease the lever pull.

The chassis, too, gets no more than regular enduro attention. The frame is untouched, but the wheels are carefully modified to ease removal. The pins in the open-ended swingarm are discarded and the snail cam adjuster is welded to the left end of the axle. A cupped washer is also welded to the righthand snail cam to trap the flat washer in position on that side. Tire removal is made easier by shaving 2mm from the rim on the brake side of the rear wheel and the speedo side of the front. And because tires sometimes need removing quickly, Team Yamaha uses rim pins (rather than locks) to secure its Metzelers.

Yamaha also uses an O-ring chain, which will best withstand the abuse of tough events. And to prevent derailment, the bottom two screws are removed from the nylon chain guide. The aluminum backing plate is then shortened slightly, which allows the nylon to flex back into position after an impact.

For desert events you might even want to drill some small holes in the center of the air box cover to increase air capacity. But this, like all the other changes, is the sort of minor alteration that you would consider with any enduro bike. And if you make these simple changes to the already good IT465, you will own a bike that could earn an ISDE gold medal—or at least win a local event.

—David Dewhurst

uses a central frame rail added to its motocross chassis to protect the crankcases. The IT also has short bolt-on side tubes to protect the mag and clutch cases. The tubing is just as efficient at preventing damage as the aluminum bash plate used on previous ITs. An added advantage is that the tubing does not collect mud and water as does the skidplate, and that can make the IT a few pounds lighter at the end of a long enduro. Apart from the addition of a rear frame loop to support the fender and tool pouch, the IT chassis is identical to this year's YZ. In spite of a one-degree-steeper head angle than last year's IT, the 465 frame still fosters slow steering.

The old IT felt like a Bonneville streamliner in the woods, as though it were designed for high-speed desert use rather than fast trails. The 465 certainly is quicker-steering, but it still is not the ideal woods bike. With a narrower handlebar and plenty of body English you can keep an IT on time between the trees, but you start a tight event at a disadvantage.

Open-terrain enduros are where the IT is *really* at home. The motocross chassis and the latest aluminum swingarm are ideally suited to high-speed western events. There is not a trace of the frame flex that used to afflict low-tech ITs of the past. Yamaha's new win-at-all-costs approach has made the motocross-based IT the ideal weapon for winning an enduro in a motocross-style special test, rather than simply staying on time in the woods.

Yamaha does help you stay on your minute, though, with some handy little detail touches. For instance, the now-familiar quick-detach rear wheel is even stronger and easier to remove. The axle is now a massive 20mm in diameter, and two spacers have been removed from the securing package, so there are even fewer parts to lose in the mud. And once you get the wheel out, the tire comes off more easily, too. The new DID rims have deeper central wells to let one tire bead ease out of the way while the other is levered off the rim.

Even air-filter servicing is simplified on the new IT. The airbox itself is larger than last year's YZ design, which lets you get the filter in place more easily. Access is made even simpler by a new flip-off airbox cover held in place by a single rubber strap. The design is both basic and, thankfully, waterproof.

The rest of the bike bristles with little, but pertinent, details. You won't need to open up the tool pouch on the rear fender to replace a broken headlamp bulb. The combination light and number plate can be flipped off by hand in seconds, saving you time and possible penalty points at the

Charting the Changes

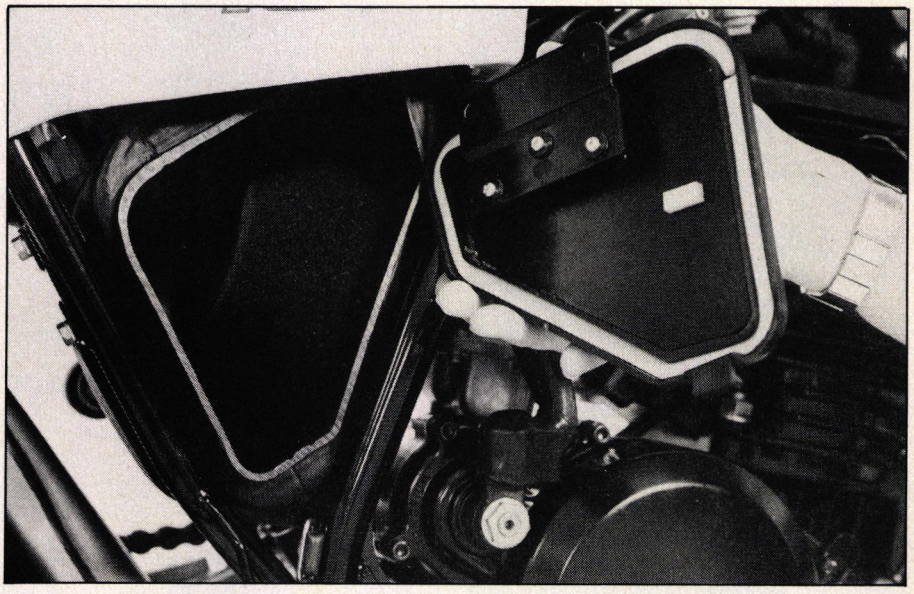
Engine: Capacity increased 40cc by lengthening stroke 7mm. New, compact gearbox internals with the latest YZ-style shifter mechanism. Engine is located by new vibration-absorbing mounts.

Chassis: The latest YZ motocross chassis is used with a 1.5-degree steeper head angle than IT425. Single downtube design and all-tube backbone replace twin tubes and pressed steel on IT425. New aluminum swingarm helps account for 2-inch longer wheelbase.

Suspension: Shorter YZ-style monoshock now has 28 adjustments and a remote reservoir. Fork stanchion diameter increases from 36mm to 38mm, wheel travel increases 0.5 inch. Rear wheel travel increased almost two inches.

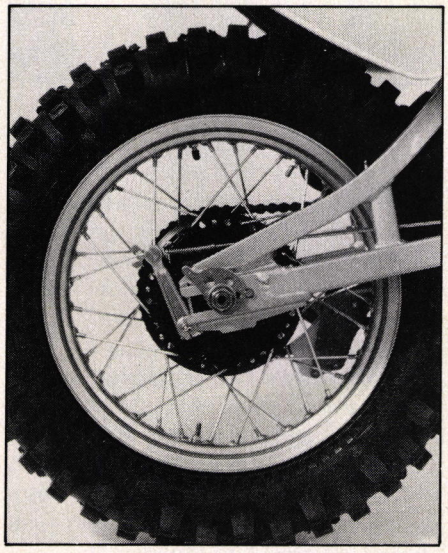
Brakes: Rear hub uses the latest YZ design and is 10mm smaller than before. The front hub comes directly from the YZ465 and uses twin leading shoes.

Details: Gas tank capacity increases 0.25 gallon. New plastic also includes squarer side panels, redesigned fenders, quick-detach front number plate/light and hand guards. The speedometer is replaced by a resettable odometer. Rear axle is larger and uses less washers to locate a 17-inch rear wheel. Airbox capacity is increased. A plastic bevel gear whirlpool twistgrip is fitted. Paint changes from blue to white.



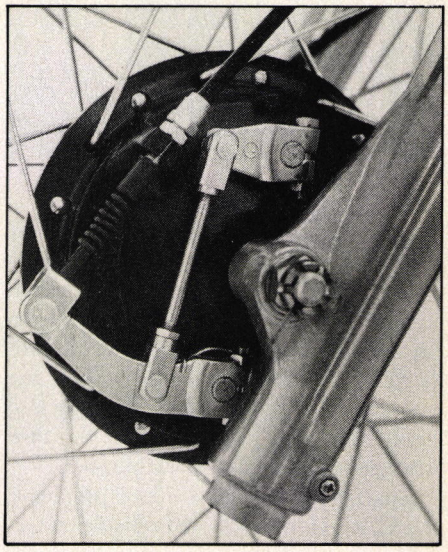
A single rubber band is all that retains the watertight airbox access cover

Yamaha shows the enduro world the quick and easy way it should be.



Aluminum swingarm and simplified axle

Removal of 17-inch wheel made easier.



Yamaha's brake is a double asset

Two shoes perform the stopping feat.

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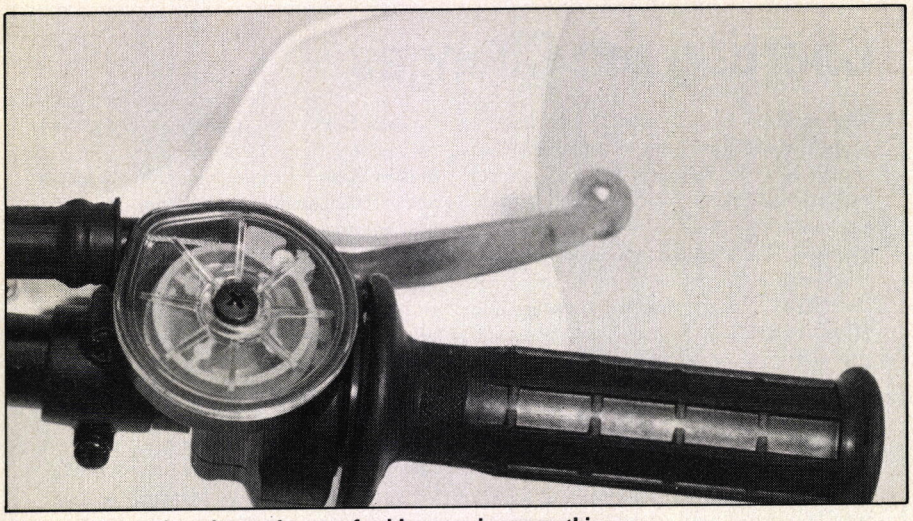
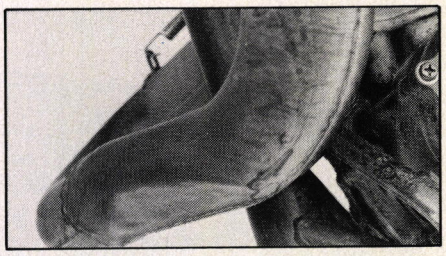


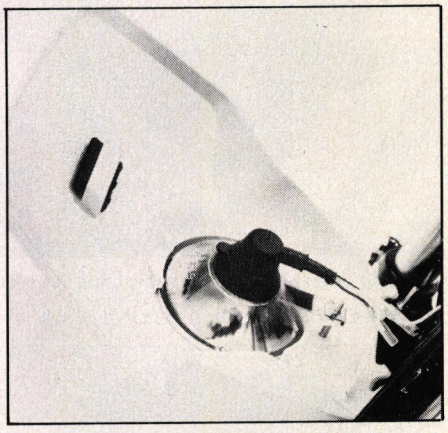
Whirlpool throttle reduces chance of cable snagging something

But fragile plastic peek-a-boo cover can break in a fall.



Deeply dinged exhaust system

The annoying price of performance.



Front light removal without tools

Small details can make the difference.

end of a long enduro.

Yamaha has also mounted the hand guards first seen on the TT250. Unfortunately, these are more ornamental than functional. They do stop some water from hitting your hands, but they offer no protection from branches or rocks, and can even fill with mud in a spill. You may also break the clear plastic top to the new whirlpool throttle if you tumble over.

Apart from these few minor problems, the IT is a very rugged and reliable motorcycle. Team Yamaha's Larry Roeseler proved that point by finishing as top American scorer in last year's ISDT. He rode a bone-stock production prototype of this bike to a Gold Medal in the world's toughest enduro. And while the IT can take you to an enduro gold, it can still be fun for a day's ride in the hills.

The IT465's slow steering may discount it as the world's best all-around enduro bike, but it is still a remarkable motorcycle. In that respect, the 465 is similar to Yamaha's first serious motocross bikes in the early Seventies. They, too, were only a short step behind Europe's best—and after a few years of development they soon became some of the best motorcycles you could buy. •

Ride Review

• Four-stroke engines? Who needs 'em? Not me. Not when there's an IT465 around. I mean, I *know* it's a two-stroke, but the IT gives you everything you always wanted in a four-stroke, and less—like that it's not as hard to start, isn't as top-heavy and doesn't have any valves to get out of adjustment. Not only that, the 465 is quicker than a thumper *and* just about as tractable, plus it's quite a bit easier to handle when you're either creeping along at a walking pace or riding at blindingly fast speeds—which, incidentally, it is capable of reaching in mere seconds. Yet the only four-stroke I've ever been on that would lug down as far and as easily as this tractor-like Yamaha was a prototype Honda trials bike, and it was worth almost $40,000. And was painfully slow, to boot.

Automatic transmissions? Don't need them, either, when you're on an IT465. Just click the thing into gear—any one of them will do, most likely—and go. Sure, some gears cause the motor to make more noise than others, and I do believe that there's a difference in acceleration, although not a lot. Regardless, the end result is the same: You get there. You should, however, shift every once in a while, whether you need to or not. It helps prevent, they say, the build-up of rust on the shifting forks due to inactivity. —*Paul Dean*

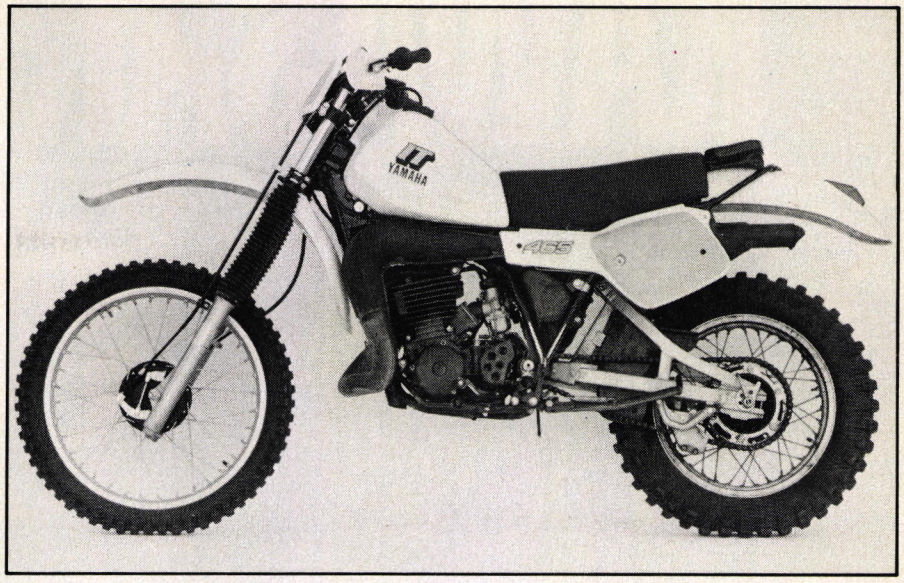
• I've never really been impressed with Yamaha's big-bore enduro bikes. At least not until now. The IT465 is a new breed that Open-Classers have waited a long time for. It's a state-of-the-art MXer-with-lights, the likes of which used to only come from Europe. Only this time, it's Made in Japan.

Frankly, I was expecting another torquey monster that did little but dig trenches in old mother earth. But the 465's engine has the most useable powerband of any big-bore two-stroke I've ridden. Its steam engine come-on converts energy into forward motion without any unnecessary wheelspin. Even a foot of snow during the test didn't keep this beast from hooking up.

After 200 miles in the saddle, I'm convinced that the IT465 is an out-of-the-crate winner. It tackled just about every off-road situation that exists, with ease. It's a straight-line tracker on the whoops, and steers precisely in the woods. You can plonk along at trial speeds, do wheelies, slides or bermshots—I think the only thing it won't do is climb a tree. But you can try—and it just might.

I'll say it again: the IT465 impressed me. Not enough to make me leave my Swedish mount in the garage—but now it has some competition on weekends. —*Mark Diotte*

Yamaha IT465H



SPECIFICATIONS:

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corporation (USA)
6555 Katella Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

CATEGORY: enduro

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2099

ENGINE
Type ..... two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement ... one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust

Bore and stroke ..... 85.0mm x 82.0mm
Displacement 465.3cc
Compression ratio (corrected) 7.1:1
Carburetion ..... one 38mm Mikuni slide/needle
Air filter ..... washable oiled foam element
Lubrication ..... pre-mixed fuel and oil
Starting system ..... primary kick
Ignition ..... flywheel magneto CDI
Charging system ..... none, direct AC lighting

DRIVETRAIN
Primary drive ..... helical gears; 2.625:1 ratio
Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Final drive ..... #520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 14/44, 3.142:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.67	21.99	3.5
II	1.75	14.43	5.5
III	1.32	10.85	7.2
IV	1.00	8.25	9.4
V	0.79	6.47	12.0

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL
Front ..... air/spring, 38mm stanchion tube diameter/10.0 in. (254mm)
Rear ..... Monoshock, 15mm spring preload adjustment, 28-way rebound-damping adj/11.4 in. (290mm)

BRAKES
Front ..... drum, double-leading shoe
Rear ..... drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES
Front ..... 3.00 x 21 IRC Motocross Z Mark 11
Rear ..... 5.60 x 17 IRC Motocross Z Mark 11

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES
Weight ..... 247 lbs. (112kg)
Weight distribution ..... 46.0% front, 54.0% rear
Wheelbase ..... 58.5 to 59.3 in. (1486 to 1505mm)
Seat height ..... 37.0 in. (940mm)
Handlebar width ..... 33.0 in. (838mm)
Footpeg height ..... 16.0 in. (406mm)
Ground clearance ..... 12.0 in. (305mm), at engine cradle
Steering head angle ..... 28.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 4.80 in. (122mm)
Frame ..... tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
Fuel tank ..... plastic, 3.3 gal. (12.5l), including 0.1 gal. (0.5l) reserve
Instrumentation ..... tripmeter resettable to zero

PERFORMANCE
Top speed (calculated) ..... 88 mph (142 kph)

WARRANTY: none

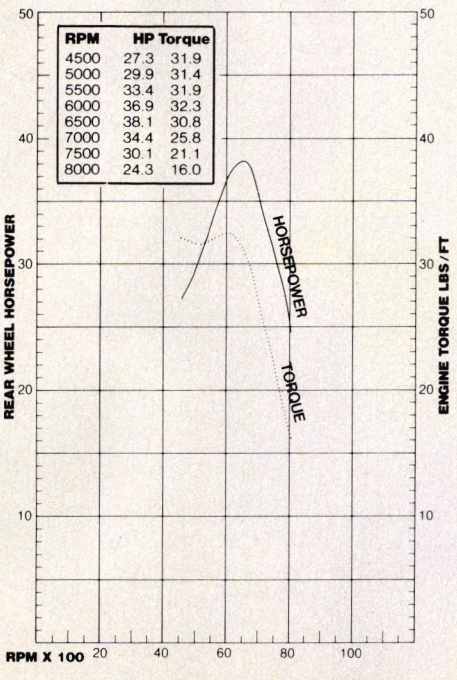
AVAILABLE COLORS: white

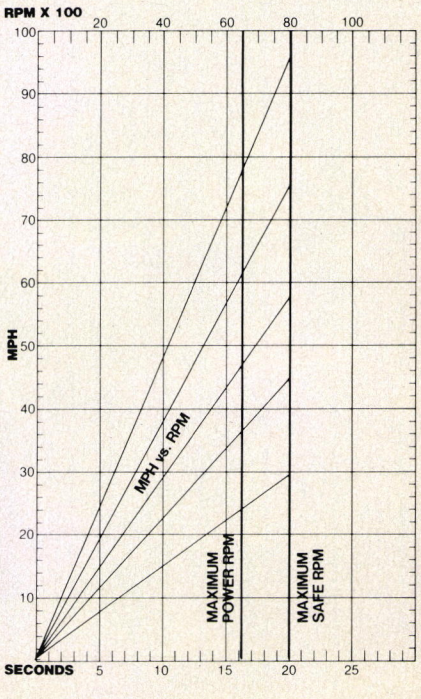
All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make & Model	Horsepower	Wheel Travel Front/Rear, in.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight bias Front/Rear percent	Transmission, number of speeds
Yamaha IT465H	38.1	10.0/11.4	247	46.0/54.0	5
Yamaha YZ465	39.4	11.2/11.8	228	46.5/53.5	5
Suzuki PE400	30.9	11.3/11.3	250	46.4/53.6	5
Husqvarna 420AXC	NA	11.5/11.9	239	45.6/54.4	4
Cam-Am 250 Qualifier III	25.2	9.7/9.8	230	44.3/55.7	6
Husqvarna 250WR	21.9	9.5/9.5	238	44.1/55.9	6

PERFORMANCE:





KAWASAKI GIVETI

Into a world of motorcycles that have lost their way. Amid soaring weight and multiplying valves, Kawasaki introduces a concept in engineering far more advanced than them all: Simplicity.

Witness the KZ750LTD. Built like its acclaimed brother, the 750 Standard. The bike that Cycle Guide said, "*. . . assaults high speeds with intelligence and finesse rather than bulk and brute strength.*" Intelligence starts with the engine. Its two valve per cylinder design and narrow configuration contribute to an overall weight that's 50 pounds lighter than its closest competitor. It delivers more net horsepower per pound. And something else: reliability. Simpler *is* better.

I BY TAKING AWAY.

But simpler isn't always easier to achieve. Take the chassis, a product of advanced stress analysis techniques and computer welding systems that a few years ago didn't exist. The result is a design that's light in weight, yet uncompromised in strength.

Everything about the 750LTD is unsurpassed. Its features, which include electronic ignition. Its handling, supported by a fully tunable suspension system. And its performance.

All in all, the 750LTD is unequaled, and not soon to be challenged.

If that sounds a little righteous – so be it.

Kawasaki

Let the good times roll.

Specifications subject to change without notice. Availability may be limited. Mirrors included as standard equipment.
Kawasaki believes in riding safely. Check local laws before you ride. Member, AMA and MSF.

MINITEST:

1981 Suzuki GS750EX

Behavior modification through moto-feedback.

• Do you ever get the feeling you're being watched? Well, you're not paranoid; someone really *is* watching. Every time you buy a motorcycle, or an accessory, or attend a motorcycle event, or read your favorite magazine, you're expressing an opinion. Your opinion. And people in all parts of the motorcycle industry are watching what you do and recording the opinions you express.

Last year, the watchers saw Suzuki introduce an all-new GS750E as a companion to the GS1100E. They looked at its strong new four-valve engine, great seat, 1100-replica styling—and very soft suspension. And Suzuki watched the sparks fly as GS750 owners charged through corners. Suzuki watched the money fly as GS750 owners scrambled to fit better rear shocks and springs, and air caps to the front fork. And, worst of all, Suzuki watched a lot of people fly past its showrooms in search of a more sporting ride.

All of the watching had an effect. Suzuki could see opinions being expressed about the GS750 and learn how to improve it for 1981. So Suzuki watched, analyzed and made changes that corrected virtually every flaw found on the 1980 model. The results are impressive.

A lack of adjustable suspension was really all that kept last year's GS750 from greatness, and the new model has been blessed with a proper cure. In back, the new shocks have four-position rebound damping and five-position spring preload. Damping adjustment is far easier than on previous Suzukis, thanks to a large external knob at the top of each shock. This means you won't be poking around with a tiny screwdriver—or the ignition key—in order to change settings. The fork now has air assist, which is adjusted by a fitting on each fork leg. While the lack of a balance tube makes adjustment a more time-consuming chore, it's certainly better than no adjustment at all.

Adjustability means you can have the kind of comfort found in last year's 750, with the kind of handling it was always capable of—but never before delivered. With the suspension adjusted for firmness, the improved GS is wonderfully stable during hard cornering. You simply pick your line and the Suzuki does almost all the rest. Bumps and dips have a minimal effect on the cornering attitude, and the bike exudes a confidence-inspiring feel. You can, of course, deliberately alter your line through a turn—the Suzuki is willing to cooperate even though it doesn't have the snappy, quick handling of a Honda CB750F. And while quick steering is an asset on the racetrack, on the street it means extra concentration required to maintain a smooth line through the corners. The Suzuki allows you to divert some of your attention to the real-world considerations of street riding such as traffic, debris and pavement changes. It's this handling middle ground, between racer-quick and boringly sluggish, that makes the '81 GS750 a fine sport mount. It is now willing to go as fast as you are, and does its best to make you look smooth. This is the kind of handling the strong GS750 chassis has been capable of delivering since its beginnings. But the chassis was impaired by too-soft suspension that made the 750 feel loose and wobbly. Now, at last, the GS can deliver its potential. Only the lack of cornering clearance offers any kind of restriction, and even this is far greater than the 1980 model provided. But when you're really moving, the centerstand feet and exhaust heat shields grind noisily to remind you that you're at the limit.

For some 750's, the main message is told with the handling. But for the Suzuki, that's just the beginning of the story. After you ease the suspension settings back to the comfort mode, you'll find the truly pleasant side of the GS750. That's the side of the bike that Suzuki watched customers enjoy last year. You could easily mistake the E for a touring-only mount. It rides with the stability and assurance of a supertanker in light seas. The Suzuki's 60-inch wheelbase eliminates the pitching associated with smaller bikes, and the suspension responds well to all but the smallest ripple. The riding position allows you to assume several different postures during long rides, which reduces fatigue, and the dual-density foam seat is second only to full-touring Suzuki perches

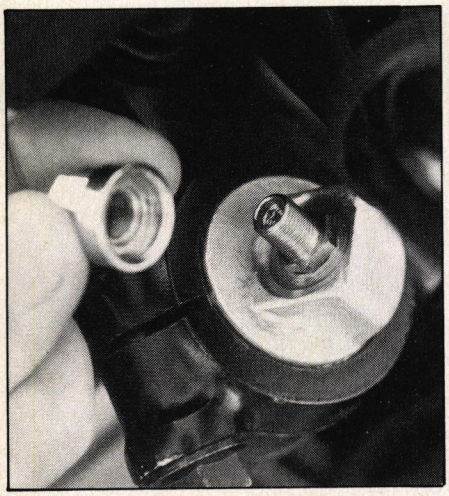
The engine does its part to enhance the comfort, too. It is extremely smooth and quiet, with only a few minor incidences of vibration through the RPM band. None of the vibration occurs at normal cruising speeds, so the grips and pegs remain still, and the mirrors clear.

Frugality is another strong point of the TSCC mill. Mileage soars to the mid-50 mpg range during steady cruising. And in spite of its miserly way with gas, the engine delivers clean carburetion and fairly quick warm-ups. Power is up slightly from last year, with the quarter-mile time quicker by a third of a second, putting it at 12.28 seconds. Suzuki spokesmen couldn't offer any specific reason for the boost in power, so it seems likely that it is simply the result of carburetion refinement.

None of the individual characteristics of the GS750 are really enough to make it a standout. There are bikes with more cornering clearance for better sport riding. Some bikes with shaft drive and cushy suspension make better tourers, and some smaller bikes deliver higher mileage. But wrapping such a diverse and competent package of characteristics in one bike is a rare achievement. It makes the GS750 a real standout, and a bargain. It's almost like getting several bikes—all for less than $3000.

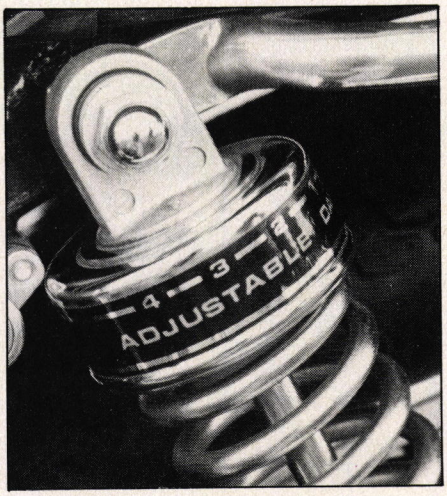
If this kind of balanced performance sounds good to you, then smile. Someone is probably watching.

—Riley Tharp



Air caps are new to the 750's fork

Pumping handling into the GS.



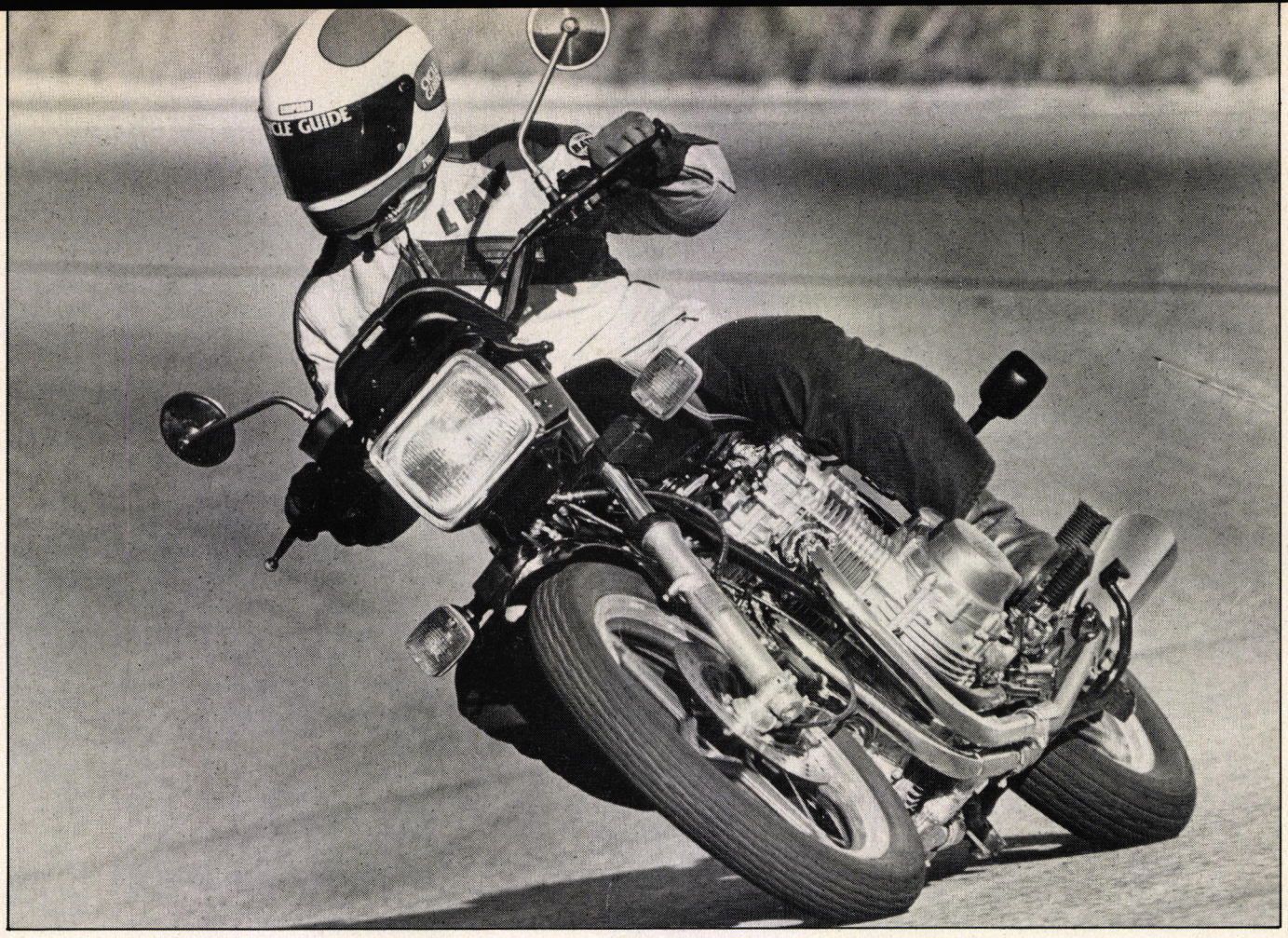
1981 GS750 gets fully-adjustable shocks

The end of the sagging suspension saga.

SUZUKI GS750EX

Importer: U.S. Suzuki Motor Corporation
3251 East Imperial Highway
Brea, California 92621

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$2999
Engine type	four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	67.0mm x 53.0mm
Displacement	747.4cc
Carburetion	four 32mm Mikuni constant-velocity
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork / wheel travel	air-spring, 35mm stanchion tube diameter / 6.1 in. (155mm)
Rear shocks / wheel travel	5-way adjustable spring preload, 4-way adjustable rebound damping / 4.5 in. (114mm)
Wheelbase	58.0 to 59.0 in. (1473 to 1499mm)
Seat height	32.0 in. (813mm)
Weight	525 lbs. (238kg)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.286 sec., 108.56 mph (175kph)
Top speed (calculated)	128 mph (206 kph)
Fuel consumption	45 to 54 mpg (19 to 23 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	black, red



10,000-MILE EVALUATION:

1980 Suzuki GS750ET

Ten grand, two-up on a Twin Swirl

• It's gone. That zero at the left side of the odometer has rolled back into the darkness and now there stands a one. While almost any of today's big-bore street bikes are capable of crossing the 10,000-mile threshold without much effort, it's still a very real milestone in the evaluation of any motorcycle. When you've shared 10,000 miles with a bike, it seems only fitting to play back the experiences and impressions that have registered on the mental odometer.

When Suzuki first introduced its second-generation 750 in 1980, it played to mixed reviews. A strong, smooth engine and supremely comfortable ride made it a popular everyday motorcycle, but its soft suspension didn't really deliver for the ten-tenths performance buyer. This staff was quick to point out the GS's shortcomings for pure performance, and predicted that it would probably be relegated to second string behind an onrushing stable of tautly strung apex-clippers. But, over the course of the long haul, the Suzuki's willing nature and compliant attitude overshadowed its troubles with high-speed handling.

Unlike most of our 10,000-mile bikes, the full test of the GS was accomplished in fairly short order. First, the Suzuki accumulated 3000 miles of normal, getting-acquainted riding. But then some changes were made for concentrated riding over a loop of the U.S. The standard Suzuki bars were discarded and lower, Euro-style bars were affixed to cheat the wind for open-air touring. Then, GS1000 shocks replaced the tired 750 units to allow greater adjustability for accommodating passenger and cargo. Finally, a pair of Krauser Starlet bags were bolted on to allow enough carrying capacity for extended two-up traveling. With a tank bag full of traveler's checks, the Suzuki hit the highway. Three weeks and seven thousand miles later it returned.

Maintenance was sparse during the tour. The Suzuki performed without benefit of—or need for—frequent adjustments and lubrication. During the course of 7000 hard miles the Suzuki's 16 valves were totally neglected. The post-trip inspection revealed that only four of the adjusters were slightly out of tolerance, which attests to the durability and stability of Suzuki's 1980-new valve-actuating system. Equally durable was the engine, the first from Suzuki with plain bearings and high-pressure oiling. In spite of the newness of its design, the mill remained leak-free through 10,000 miles, and only used a pint of oil every 1200 miles. Fuel consumption ranged from 43 mpg through Rocky Mountain twisties to a high of 57 mpg during Great Plains cruising. Overall, the 750 squeezed an average of nearly 53 miles from every gallon of fuel.

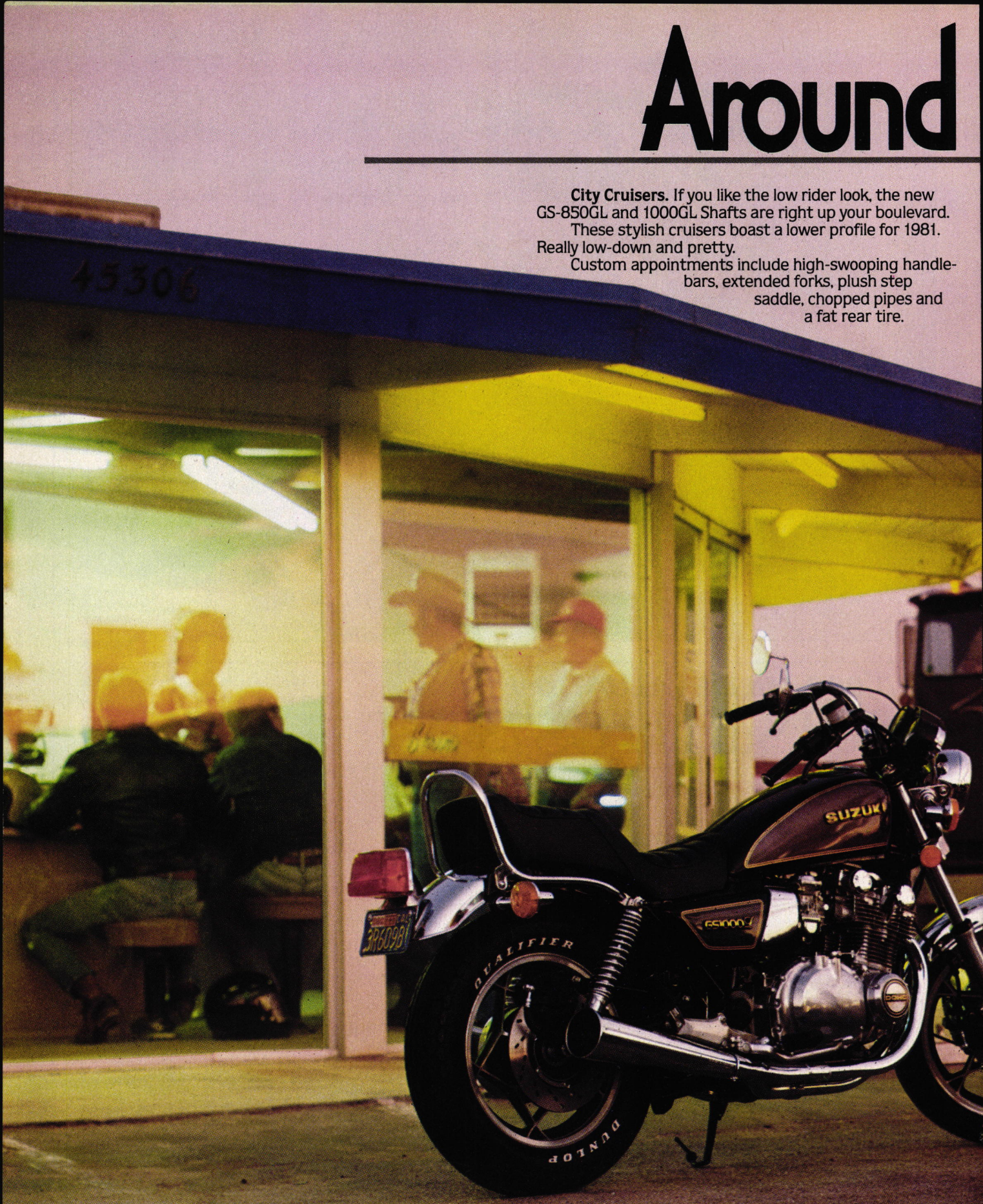
Only one problem surfaced during the extended use of the 750. A slight pulsation in the front brakes worsened as the miles accumulated, with warping of the front brake rotors finally making the brakes seem grabby and non-linear. Replacement of the rotors is covered by Suzuki's 12-month warranty, but the problem could occur again as miles are put on the new units. The uneven braking really isn't enough to spoil the Suzuki's ride, but it's something that shouldn't happen after a decade of commonplace disc-brake use on motorcycles.

Other than the warped rotors, the GS750 offered no target for complaint over the long haul. After just a standard tune-up, it was ready to chalk up another 10,000 miles. And best of all, its wide-spectrum abilities have left the mental odometer ready for another 10,000 as well. —*Riley Tharp*

Around

City Cruisers. If you like the low rider look, the new GS-850GL and 1000GL Shafts are right up your boulevard. These stylish cruisers boast a lower profile for 1981. Really low-down and pretty.

Custom appointments include high-swooping handlebars, extended forks, plush step saddle, chopped pipes and a fat rear tire.



12-Month Unlimited Mileage Warranty*

*Offered only in the 48 contiguous United States and Alaska. Refer to U.S. Suzuki "GS Model Limited Warranty Policy" at Suzuki dealerships. A similar warranty is offered in Canada.

town. Or town to town.

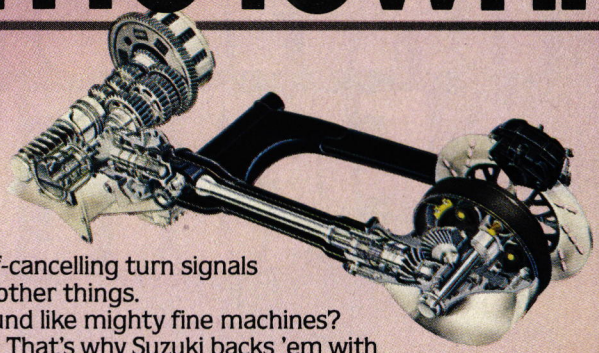
So you see, these bikes will take you around town in style. They'll also get you out of town fast.

Read on.

Country Crossers. Thanks to the smoothest, lash-free shaftdrive in the business, these machines are ideal for the open road.

Engine is a long-distance hauler, too. The 4-stroke DOHC inline Four is exceptionally quiet and smooth. And it's virtually maintenance-free. Thanks to thoughtful items like a fully transistorized ignition (no points to adjust) and an automatic cam chain tensioner.

Both bikes are also equipped with an easy-riding suspension (front air forks and rear shocks with 5 load settings, 4 damping adjustments). Triple slotted disc brakes. Electric fuel gauge. Halogen headlight.



And self-cancelling turn signals among other things.

Sound like mighty fine machines? You bet. That's why Suzuki backs 'em with one of the finest warranties around. Namely, a 12-month unlimited mileage warranty.*

Nice to know. Whether you're riding around town or around the country.

Suzuki 1981 SUZUKI® **The Performer.**

Member Motorcycle Safety Foundation. Ride safely. Always wear a helmet, eye protection and appropriate riding apparel.

KAWASAKI BREEDS FASTER HORSES.

Our new KZ1000 engine. Bred from the original KZ1000, an engine that Motorcyclist declared "*. . .one of the most successful designs ever developed. Bar none.*"

Now, we've made it even faster. By making it lighter.

For 1981, Kawasaki redesigned this legend from top to bottom, eliminating excess weight without sacrificing strength and dependability.

Instead of introducing the top-heavy complexity of four valves per cylinder, we refined our bullet-proof two-valve design. And held down weight and maintenance, too.

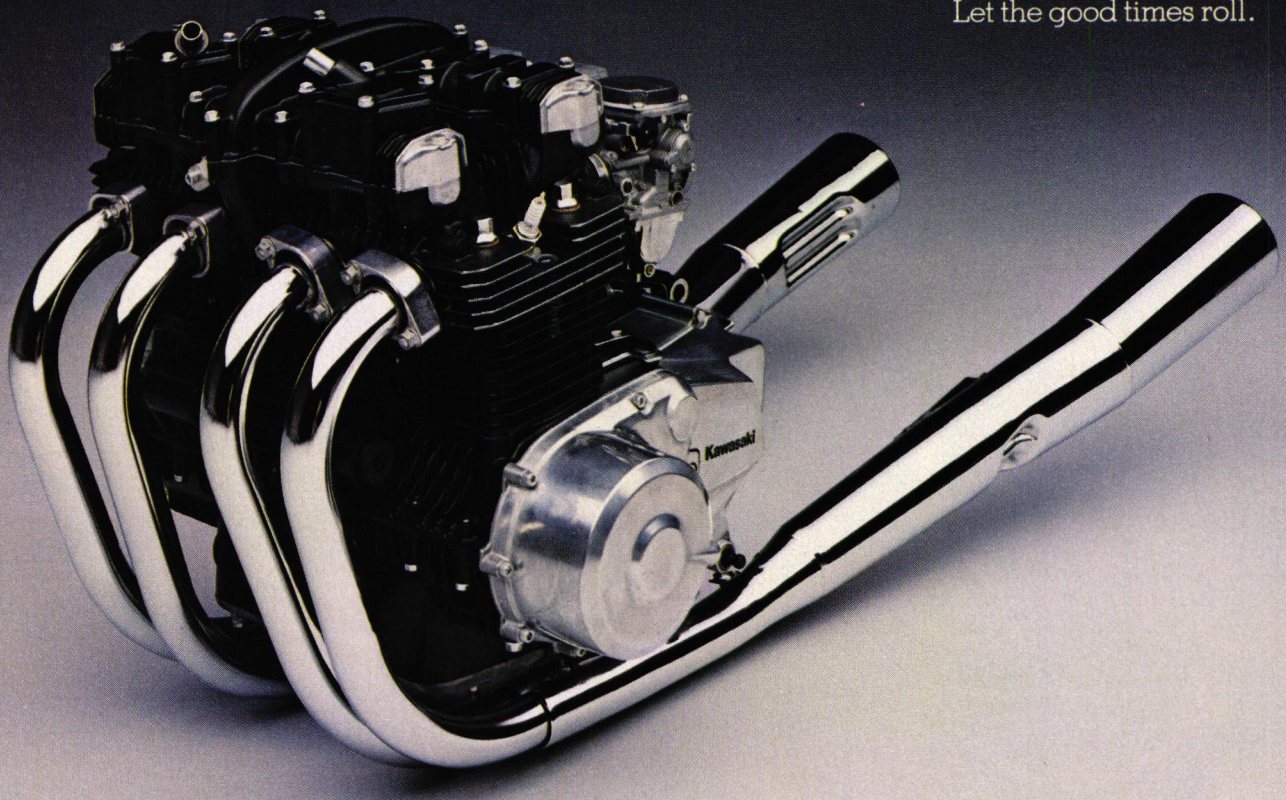
Next, we narrowed the engine width, massaged the crankshaft, and said goodbye to the kickstarter. We shed even more weight with aluminum carbs, instead of zinc. An aluminum clutch housing. An ounce here and a gram there.

The bottom line? An engine that nets more power and torque, and is a full 15 pounds lighter.

More good news. We've also applied our "lighter is faster" philosophy to other engines in our street line with equal success. So, after you get tired of watching the competition gain weight, get down to your Kawasaki dealer and see how much more you can gain by losing it.

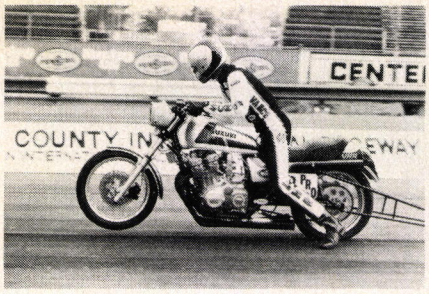
Kawasaki

Let the good times roll.



Specifications subject to change without notice. Availability may be limited.
Kawasaki believes in riding safely. Check local laws before you ride. Member, AMA and MSF.

TSUBAKI SETS THE PACE!



Terry Vance #1 NMRA-IDBA
PRO-STOCK CHAMPION

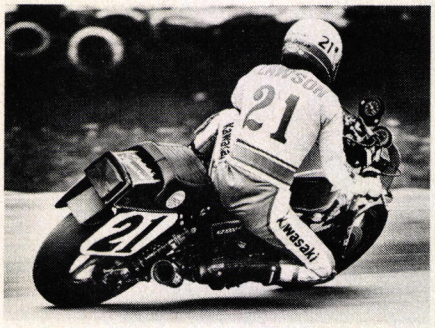
DRAG RACING

The ultimate challenge to both man and machine . . . you have a mere ¼ mile and seconds to prove your superiority. TSUBAKI users again show their superiority winning and setting records in the fastest classes.

TERRY VANCE/VHR captured his 6th national championship in PRO-STOCK. Terry's GS1100 set both ends of the record (8.77 e.t./151.26 mph) and was the 1st in his class to go over 150 mph on his way to winning both the NMRA and IDBA championships.

MIKE BRUSO/POWER ENTERPRISES in A/F class set both ends of the record in NMRA with a 7.82 e.t. at 177.86 mph. Mike's Kawasaki captured the Super Eliminator championship and is also the world's fastest naturally aspirated motorcycle.

JON BAUGH/ORIENT EXPRESS was NMRA runner-up with his A/DT Kawasaki for Super Eliminator. Baugh holds his class record at 169.49 mph.



Eddie Lawson/Team Kawasaki

ROAD RACING

The most rugged challenge where consistency in performance separates the winners from the pack. TSUBAKI chain users have dominated superbike roadracing for 4 years now.

REG PRIDMORE'S Kawasaki won the championship for 3 consecutive years.

TEAM KAWASAKI riders Eddie Lawson and Dave Aldana did a brilliant job of riding in '80 for the superbike title. Team manager Gary Mathers uses and endorses Tsubaki exclusively for its proven endurance.

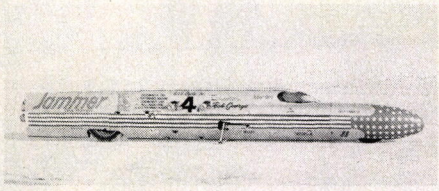
John O'Mara/Team Mugen Winner
125 U.S. G.P.

MOTOCROSS RACING

The supreme test of rider and machine against the worst elements of mud, sand, water and searing heat. TSUBAKI 520 PRO CHAIN users overcame all these elements and proved the true grit of this new Tsubaki chain.

JOHN O'MARA/TEAM MUGEN in his first year of national competition overcame all the odds at the U.S. 125 GP. He charged through the mud and mire to be the first American and the first privateer to win this prestigious race.

MARTY MOATES/TEAM LOP facing the best international riders ever assembled won the United States Grand Prix. This is the first time in history an American won this event.



The Jammer, "World's Fastest Harley"

BONNEVILLE salt flats has for decades given man one week in which to set the world's top speed record. Tsubaki chain went along for the ride when Bob George in The Jammer Streamliner captured the S-AS-300 record at 276.375 mph. The twin Harley powered machine is "The World's Fastest Harley."

One Year Guarantee

Tsubaki offers a one year guarantee to prove we make the best motorcycle chain available. No other chain manufacturer makes an offer like this, because no one else can make a chain exactly like this.

HI-PERFORMANCE "QR" SERIES Solid rollers, shot peened parts, special alloy steel, extra heavy press fit pins, quad staked riveting. Each chain is prestressed/prestretched on actual sprocket teeth.

520 "PRO" SERIES All of the above features of the QR series with the addition of shouldered and projected bushing design which virtually eliminates kinking—especially designed for high power dirt bikes . . . sand, mud, grit, water won't stop it!

"HSL" SERIES SELF-LUBE CHAIN Extra heavy link plates, sintered metal bushings engineered to critical tolerances, and specially formulated lubricant impregnated in the bushings. Proven in thousands of hours of roadracing, this is a true self lubricating chain for the road touring enthusiast.

NICKEL PLATED "530QR/NP" SERIES Has all the features of the hi-performance QR series together with a brilliant show quality nickel finish. Tsubaki's unique plating avoids hydrogen embrittlement and also acts as a rust inhibitor.

TSUBAKI MOTORCYCLE CHAIN
UST, Inc., Wheeling, Illinois 60090, U.S.A.
ALSPEED PRODUCTS, Ltd.,
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

ROAD TEST:

Yamaha XJ550 Seca

The Sabre-jet smile hides a killer's instinct for hunting apexes.

BY LARRY WORKS

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 AARON KILEY

Prepare yourself for some disorientation when you first ride Yamaha's new Seca 550. Not anything as radical as an inner-ear imbalance, just a little role confusion. To start with, you don't just push the Seca out of the garage and into the driveway. You remove the wheel chocks and roll it out of the hangar. Then, instead of snapping closed your helmet's visor, you pull forward on the canopy and latch it into place. And finally—and most assuredly—you don't simply ride off.

The impression the Seca conveys is decidedly aeronautic, but it's not entirely the result of its jutting, Sabre-jet snout. And the natural cockpit effect of the drooping handlebar that continues the sweep of the windscreen around the instrument bank doesn't quite account for it, either. No, the Seca's airy attraction is the almost unmistakable conviction that from the moment you apply a little throttle and feed in the light clutch you are no longer bound by ground physics. From the first turn that you simply bank through and forget, you know that you're at the controls of something uncommonly good.

As you pilot the Seca through the hardest series of twisting apexes you can find, the point is driven home. The handling is light, responsive. Flick left and dial in a little more thrust, flick hard right and get the nose down; you're through any combination of sweepers, hairpins or whatever, all with a maximum dose of good kinesthetics and a minimum of effort. The Seca transforms your thoughts into maneuvers just as surely and quickly as if a length of cable passed through the back of your helmet and tied your brain stem into some control box hidden behind the fairing.

If you started to pull the bike apart to satisfy your curiosity about that miniature control center, you'd be sorely disappointed, though. There's simply no trickery, no techno-magic involved whatsoever. So, if you sorted through every piece that makes the Seca as good as it is, the list of ingredients you'd end up with might look pretty mundane. No single piece accounts for the absolutely spot-on relationship that exists between the Seca and almost any stretch of pavement. It's a thoroughly unremarkable collection of bits that achieves its measure of greatness only by having been assembled in the right combination.

One key element in the Seca's recipe for pavement prowess that *would* turn up right off is low weight. At 418 pounds, fairing and all, the Seca is eight pounds lighter than last year's KZ550, 24 pounds lighter than Suzuki's GS550 and a whopping 50 pounds less than a CX500 Custom. Of course, many of the power-to-weight bene-

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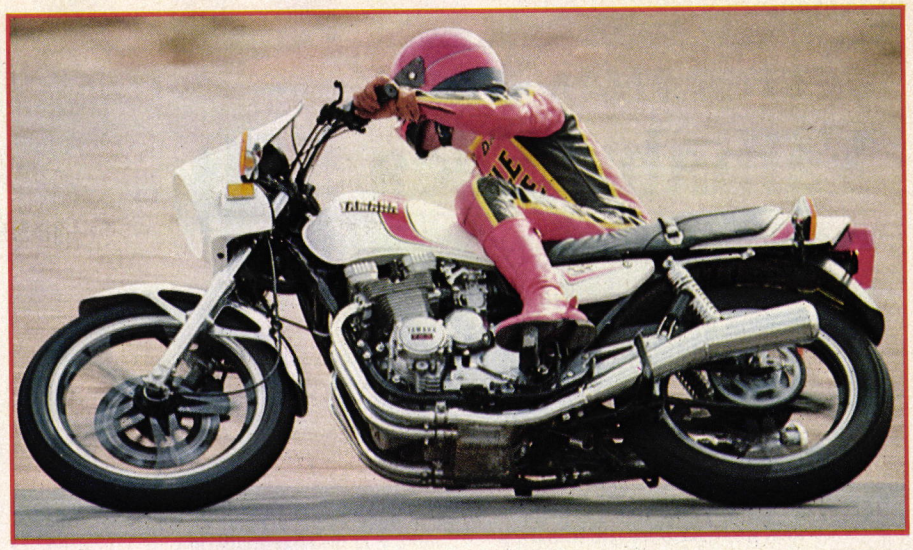

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BETTER THAN STOCK:

Yamaha Seca 550

The way it should be.

• Some bikes you just can't leave alone. The Seca 550 is like that. Inside the civilized Seca, the perfect 550cc street bike, we knew there lurked Super Seca, a Sunday afternoon apex-strafer capable of ripping the throat out of any KZ550 foolish enough to wander into its path. And so we set about making a monster out of Yamaha's sophisticated handiwork.

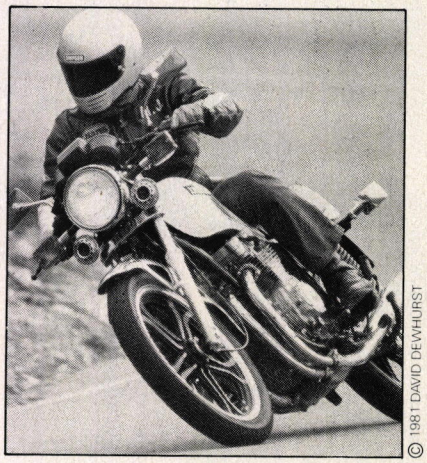
Naturally, we began with the suspension. The engine has horsepower enough, although dropping a tooth from the countershaft sprocket might give it more of an edge when it comes to out-dragging KZ550s away from the corners. The suspension was more crucial though, because it permitted too much front-end dive and furnished too little rear-end control for squeezing the last bit of speed from the engine.

We found the solution by following the lead of Yamaha's Doug van Almelo, who tunes the Seca 550 that John Glover has used to humiliate KZ550s in Box Stock roadracing at AFM events. The fork's standard 10-weight fork oil was replaced by the same quantity of PJ-1 20-weight oil for more damping control, and then one-inch spacers were inserted into the fork tubes to keep the fork from plunging to its stops so readily under braking.

Van Almelo uses S&W Street Strokers on the back of his Seca, but we were anxious to try Interpart's Mulholland LTG shocks. Derived from a motocross design, the $145 LTGs incorporate oversize damper rods, finned shock bodies and an internal gas-displacement bag for durable, fade-free operation. The LTGs also are tunable and rebuildable. Unfortunately, they weren't yet available in the proper eye-to-eye length for the Seca, so we had to settle for shocks three-quarters of an inch too long. A soft spring was fitted so the stock ride height could be maintained and the Seca's steering geometry would be relatively unaffected. We'd ordinarily include different tires for any Better Than Stock project in addition to the new suspension, but the Bridgestones were too good to frivolously spend an unnecessary $120.

The last modification involved a change in the riding position and the look of the bike. First we removed the fairing. While the fairing concept is appropriate for 550 riders, we didn't like the way this one compromised the bike's styling. Also, experience on the racetrack revealed that it did nothing for high-speed performance. The OEM handlebar also looks ungainly, but its replacement by a $27 Superbike Bar from K&N was also motivated by a desire to open up the riding position for larger riders, and encourage the kind of crouch consistent with precise steering control.

In the end, we didn't create a monster after all. The fork felt fractionally harsher in ride quality, but the Seca didn't pitch back and forth on the freeway like the usual oversprung, short-coupled rat racer. The narrow handlebar made engine vibration slightly more noticeable, but the riding position made long-distance cruising pleasant even without a fairing. We only lacked the rearsets fitted to the Euro-550 (do you hear us, YPDI?) to finally attain ergonomic nirvana.



© 1981 DAVID DEWHURST

More importantly, the Seca Super gained a more taut stance in the corners. Front-end dive wasn't eliminated, but it was certainly more controlled. Interpart's shock dyno revealed that the Seca's stock shocks already offer more rebound damping than the usual Yamaha units, but the added control furnished by the LTGs was immediately apparent. Suddenly the Seca had developed the feel that makes the CB750F so rewarding to ride. A low center of gravity helps it heel over effortlessly compared to a KZ550, while the sensation of neutral steering heightened by our suspension modifications gave it surgical precision when it came to clipping apexes.

We could tell after riding the stock Seca on the racetrack that an even better motorcycle lay within. What proved surprising, though, was how quickly the Seca showed its KZ550-eating mettle with only a few inexpensive modifications. Indeed, this Super Seca revealed less about the bike's potential than about how good the stocker is to begin with.

—Michael Jordan

fits of the Seca's slim design would be wasted if the end result of all that paring turned out to be a microbike. It isn't; the Seca strikes a fair balance between the shorter-coupled KZ and the full-on spread of the CX.

As you'd expect after a trip to the scale, the Seca's light weight starts with a compact engine package. Much of the same technology that went into keeping the Maxim 650 trim also keeps the Seca off of the overweight list. Externally, at least, the Seca's engine appears to be nothing more than a Maxim 650 engine that's been run through one more cycle of Yamaha's corporate compacter and then had an endless, non-O-ring chain grafted onto where a shaft used to be. And there are some obvious similarities. Both 650 and 550 keep engine width to a minimum by laying the alternator behind the bank of cylinders rather than hanging it on the end of the crankshaft. The result for both engines is substantially less girth. In the Seca's case, it's an engine that, at less than 16 inches across its widest point, is narrower than Yamaha's own XS400 twin.

Beyond placement of the alternator, though, the two engines diverge. Rather than use the 650 Maxim's straight-cut gears to spin the alternator shaft, the Seca runs a Hy-Vo-type chain with a slipper-type tensioner. The adjuster is hydraulic and manually set, with a second plunger and spring to minimize chain slap. Also, the 550's transmission output shaft is positioned directly behind the input shaft rather than above it as in the Maxim.

Something else you'll find on the 550 that doesn't appear on the 650's mechanical readout is the Yamaha Induction Control System (YICS). The system connects each cylinder's intake tract with the other three in the network. Then, during each cylinder's stroke, YICS draws a small fuel/air charge from the other three links in the chain and injects it into the cylinder's main intake port through a sub-intake port set just above the intake valve's seat. The YICS port shoots its charge into the combustion chamber at a high velocity and at an angle calculated to impart a swirling effect, which produces increased turbulence of the fuel charge and, theoretically at least, more efficient combustion.

Supposedly, the effect of the YICS system, which isn't on the domestic 400cc model from which the Seca is derived, is to increase fuel economy. Well it might be. Our test bike averaged mid-50s mpg on the highway at just about any speed, with fuel consumption increasing to 44 mph when the Seca's wick was twisted hard in full-on sporting mode. One more thing passed on

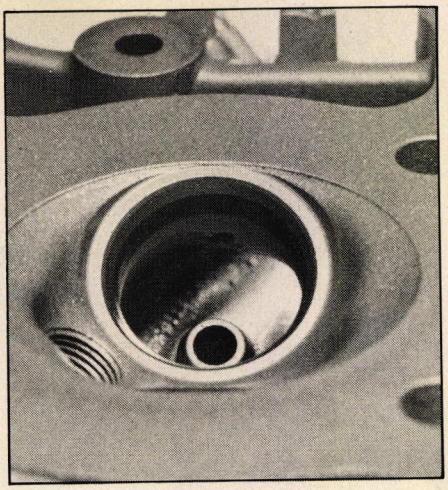
by YICS is the need for a special tool when synchronizing the carbs. The tool, part number TLM110802500, passes through the rear of the intake manifold to seal off the sub-intake ports so that the YICS is disrupted and each of the Seca's four 28mm CV Mikunis can be adjusted separately.

If you continued to look for secrets that account for the Seca's strengths, the valve train would offer few clues. Good two-valve-per-cylinder design, thoughtful application, yes. But tricks, no. The Seca's dual overhead cams are driven by a roller chain, which is in turn kept taut by a dual-spring tensioner that doesn't require adjustment. The valves are set in the standard Yamaha external-shim method, and the shims are some of the few items common to the 550 and 650 engines.

All the way down the line the Seca disavows most gimmickry. In fact, you could begin to wonder if Yamaha didn't just hang a fairing onto the Seca in part to conceal an otherwise mechanically conventional motorcycle. And you wouldn't be too far from wrong. In the development of the Seca 550 from a Japan-only 400cc model, Yamaha's U.S. product planners wanted styling akin to the radical lines of the new 750 Seca. The idea was to create an indentifiable look—much like the unified styling of Yamaha's own Specials—that would highlight the new high-performance line. It didn't work out that way. The cost of producing the Seca 550 is relatively high, and it didn't allow for a major restyling job. And so, any styling licks applied to the Seca 550 had to begin from basically the same lines as the Japan-only bike. The fairing was added to give the Seca a long, low look, which it accomplishes despite its shortish wheelbase. Another of the fairing's purposes was to keep the pearl-white Seca reminiscent of, but not too close to, the looks of Yamaha's discontinued RD400 Daytona Special.

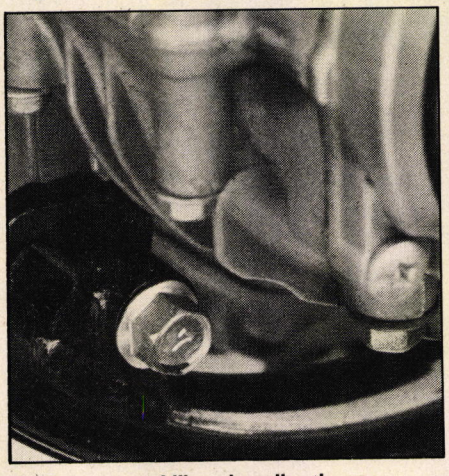
Inside of that nosecone you will find a few small concessions to flash. Above the conventional speedometer and tachometer—separated by warning lights for oil pressure, high beam and neutral—is another instrument case. On its left side is a voltmeter, while on the right is a fuel gauge that continues to operate even when the ignition is off, automotive-style, and is calibrated to put the needle squarely on "E" when the 550 is ready to go on reserve. The gauge is quite accurate, so that when it starts reminding you that it's time to refuel, it's not telling you to panic; you've still got more than one gallon—or 50 miles—before the tank runs dry.

Aside from the added instruments, the only other out-of-the-way bit on the Seca



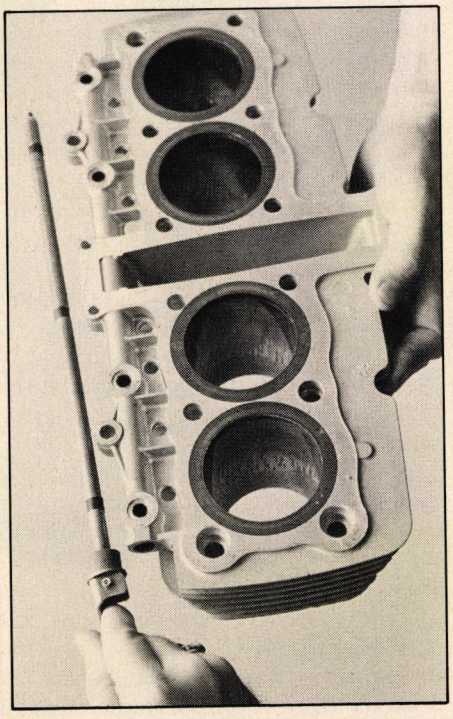
YICS sub-inlet ports swirl fuel mixture

Tiny turbo-jets for more mpg.



Rubber mounts kill engine vibration

And go on to conceal the evidence.



Special tool seals off YICS ports

Giving the carbs a synching feeling.

550 is one that you might never notice. It's an ignition cutoff that only comes into play when you try to keep the engine running in gear with the sidestand down. It won't work. Put the 550 in gear with the stand extended and the engine dies, whether you've got the clutch in or out. And if you try to start the Seca in gear with the stand down, all you get is the voltmeter needle swinging up to the center of its arc and the oil-pressure warning light winking as the starter button is depressed. So if, for some reason, you forget about the cutout, you could waste lots of time digging around in the Seca's underseat fusebox trying to find out what blew.

But a few more gauges and a stand-mounted kill switch don't really begin to qualify the Seca for any Hi-Tech awards, and they're really the most visible blips on an otherwise flat readout. Not even the YICS seems all that earth-shattering. Even the mild-steel, double-downtube frame is nothing if not SOP, just as the single front disc/rod-operated rear drum brake arrangement is plain fare. And the suspension setup—a no-adjust fork with a single anti-stiction bushing, coupled with shocks adjustable only for preload—make the Seca 550 sound like a rolling deja vu for 90 percent of the street bikes you've seen, read about or ridden for the past five years. A cipher. A drone.

So if all you cared about were the numbers, features and theories, you might count the Seca as a high-performance write-off. But you don't and it isn't. In fact, you can shoot all that spec-sheet myopia down in flames in your first five minutes in the Seca's saddle. That humdrum 523cc engine still managed to rip off a quarter-mile at 12.994 and better than 101 mph. So much for all those notions about two-valve engines running out of steam at the top end. That run-of-the-mill braking system still managed to haul the Seca to a stop from 60 mph in 119 feet. And that laughable, virtually Stone Age suspension still manages the best highway ride of any middleweight motorcycle, bar none.

There's no proof short of the tasting that can prepare you for the smoothness of the Seca at speed. Between rubber motor mounts and an engine that doesn't seem to vibrate much anyway, you've got to fly by instruments at first unless you're anxious to have a roadside shuffle while you wait to sign for your ticket. That's why three of our testers returned with bitter complaints about the bike's wildly optimistic speedometer. It just *couldn't* be going that fast and that smoothly, they bemoaned. But a check of the speedometer showed that it was spot-on.

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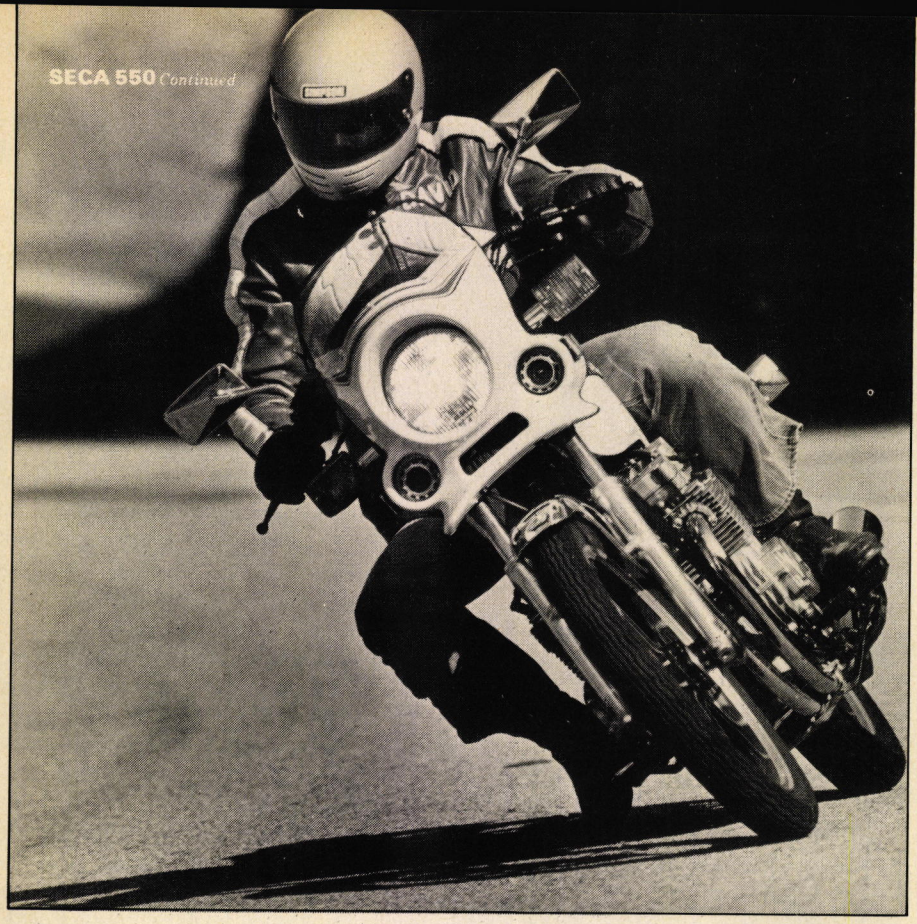


The culprit was the Seca's uncanny smoothness. Engine vibration reaches its peak at about 5000 rpm, which translates to 62 mph in sixth gear. At its worst it is only a slight tingle through the handlebar, though, not even enough to add a shimmer to the mirrors. Above 6000 rpm the tingle departs for places unknown and the 550 really comes on the cam. You've got power up to 9000 rpm in all gears, and even to the 10,000-rpm redline in all save fifth and sixth. But you don't have to rev it that hard just to get moving. The Seca's flat torque curve provides a steady rush from almost any engine speed without digging deep into the gearbox.

Determining your actual road speed is complicated by the fairing, which directs a steady blast of wind at chin level from 40 mph on. Oddly, the noise level doesn't seem to increase after 40 mph, when it starts to block out the engine noise completely. The rest of the bike also leaves you guessing at road speed, and the footpegs don't even offer a clue. The same isn't true for the passenger pegs, though, which emit a healthy buzz at almost any engine speed.

If you normally count on road shock to keep you abreast of your speed, don't. The low unsprung weight of the Seca's new cast wheels and the single-disc/drum brakes combines with a supple fork to soak up jolts and simply make them go away. The price you pay for that disappearing act is a sharp nosedive under heavy braking, but the fork's dual-rate springing is deceptive; it never seems to end its travel in a metallic clank, no matter how quickly it started to dive. And despite a spongy feel at the front brake lever and noticeable flex of the 35mm fork tubes, the Seca still stops without a shudder.

Performance at the other end of the scale doesn't feel like a tradeoff for the Seca's expertise on the highway. The steering is quick but not nervous in hard cornering, and the low *cg* and low overall weight let you flick the Seca rather than muscle it into a turn. That flick can be pretty severe before anything touches down, because the undercarriage is tucked in nicely. You really have to *want* to make sparks before you do. Even in the hardest running, adjusting the shock preload collars is redundant, and racetrack testing required only the second notch. It seems that the faster you ride, the more built-in goodness you begin to notice. So if you've really got to have wallow, it'll have to come from the aftermarket; the Seca's $2529 pricetag doesn't include any.

What it does include, though, is a straight shot of high performance, a quick reminder that wide-range performance is no longer the province of large-displacement machines. A 550 that serves up balance, a startlingly comfortable ride and rewarding engine response also earns the performance title. The Seca 550 does all that and more. It turns any ride, from an apex-strafe to a familiar milk run into . . . a mission. •

Ride Review

• Call me a styling chauvinist. I always have trouble falling in love with a bike if it looks strange to me—and the Seca looks really strange. Its fairing seems all out of place with the high bars, and the tank graphics appear to have slid back to the wrong spot.

But when I ride the Seca, I'm blessed with the inability to see the styling, so the bike becomes a real joy. The only reminder of the fairing is the blast of air that strikes at helmet level, and the paint scheme becomes something for other motorists to worry about. I'm too busy enjoying the nimble handling and the subtle, yet considerable power of the tiny engine. Forget the RD? Heck, the Seca could even make me forget my Honda 400F, and that's not easy. I guess the answer lies in trying to ride the Seca without looking at it. Come to think of it, that sounds like fun. —*Riley Tharp*

• Okay, you adults, listen up. Let's cut the gee-whiz enthusiasm for a second. Sure, you know the Seca 550 might make RD owners renounce their two-stroke religion. But you should really care about this bike because it doesn't make you feel as if you've strayed into a Saturday kiddie matinee with Buck Rogers on the screen.

Maybe because Yamaha comes to high-performance four-strokes from a mind-set obsessed with ride quality, the Seca 550 affords the most adult behavior yet in a medium displacement bike. The rubber engine mounts absorb high-rpm sting, the suspension withstands abuse with a celestial equanimity that Suzuki would be proud of, and the riding position is calibrated for people taller than the average munchkin.

Sure, this is a great bike. But it's great because Yamaha knows where racing bikes end and street bikes begin.

—*Michael Jordan*

• Yamaha's Seca 550 reflects what the middleweight class is becoming for motorcycling: a harbor for high-performance sportbikes. Its shark-nose fairing and droopy handlebar say the Seca is meant to go around corners with roadrace precision. And thanks to quick, responsive steering, it does. But that's where the roadrace heritage ends. The Seca's suspension was bred for the road—the public road. Which isn't a bad thing, mind you. After all, it's a street bike, not a four-banger TZ.

But you'll see Seca 550s on the roadrace tracks anyway, because the 550 Box Stock class is going to be the hotbed of grassroots roadracing for 1981. Secas will be in the fray, but only after suspension mods, including heavier fork oil and new rear shocks. In the meantime, the Seca remains one of the best all-around sportbikes—for the street. —*Dain Gingerelli*

Yamaha XJ550RH

SPECIFICATIONS:

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corporation (USA)
6555 Katella Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

CATEGORY: street

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2529

ENGINE

Type ..... four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement ..... double overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke ..... 57.0mm x 51.8mm
Displacement 528.7cc
Compression ratio 9.5:1
Carburetion ..... four 28mm Mikuni constant-velocity
Air filter ..... disposable paper element
Lubrication ..... wet sump
Starting system ..... electric only
Ignition ..... transistorized pointless; dual electronic pickups, dual coils
Charging system ..... 12-volt; AC generator / voltage regulator / rectifier

DRIVETRAIN

Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate
Crankshaft-to-jackshaft ..... Hy-Vo chain; 1.048:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-transmission ..... straight-cut gears; 2.321:1 ratio
Final drive ..... # 520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 16/45, 2.813:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.73	18.70	4.0
II	1.95	13.32	5.6
III	1.55	10.57	7.1
IV	1.24	8.48	8.8
V	1.04	7.09	10.6
VI	0.90	6.16	12.1

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front ..... 35mm stanchion tube diameter / 4.1 in. (104 mm)
Rear ..... 5-way adjustable spring preload / 5.8 in. (146 mm)

BRAKES

Front ..... single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.8-in. (300mm) disc
Rear ..... drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES

Front ..... 3.00H19 Bridgestone Mag Mopus L303
Rear ..... 110/90H18 Bridgestone Mag Mopus 3716

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight ..... 418 lbs. (190kg)
Weight distribution ..... 47.4% front, 52.6% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) ..... 860 lbs. (390 kg)
Wheelbase ..... 55.8 to 56.8 in. (1416 to 1441mm)
Seat height ..... 32.3 in. (819mm)
Handlebar width ..... 29.5 in. (749mm)
Footpeg height ..... 12.8 in. (324mm)
Ground clearance ..... 5.8 in. (146mm), at exhaust crossover
Steering head angle ..... 27.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail ..... 4.29 in. (109mm)
Frame ..... tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity 3.1qt. (2.9/)
Fuel tank ..... steel, 4.2 gal. (16.0/), including 1.1 gal. (4.0/) reserve
Instrumentation ..... speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, voltmeter, fuel gauge

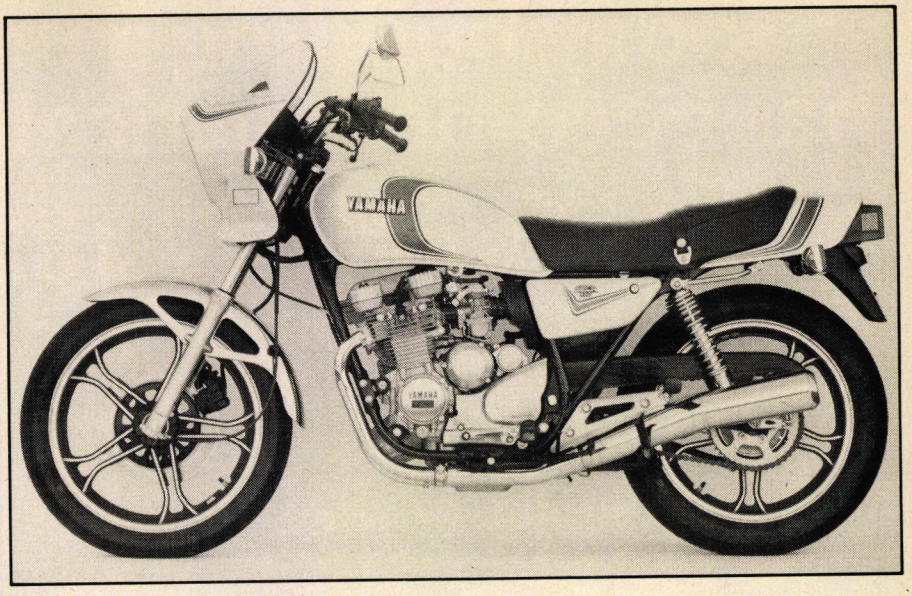
PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption ..... 44 to 55 mpg (19 to 23 km/l)
Range, maximum ..... 185 to 231 miles (298 to 372km)
Range, reserve only ..... 48 to 61 miles (77 to 97km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated ..... 29 mph actual
Speedometer error, 60 mph indicated ..... 58 mph actual
Best ¼-mile acceleration . 12.994 sec., 101.69 mph (164 kph)
Top speed (calculated) ..... 121 mph (195 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph ..... 31 ft. (9m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph ..... 119 ft. (36m)

WARRANTY: 6 months

AVAILABLE COLORS: New Pearl White

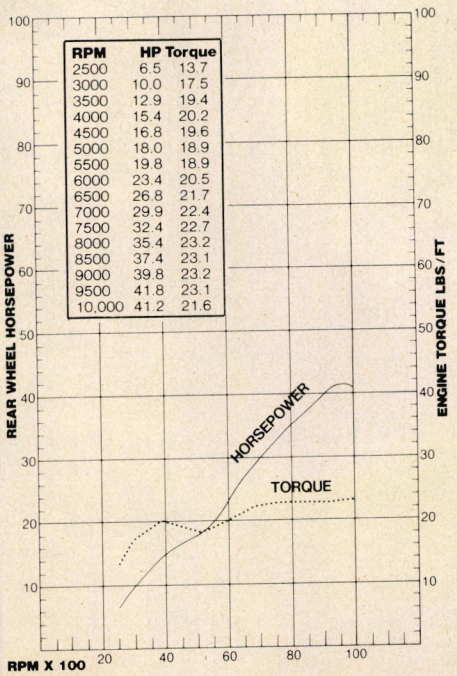
All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

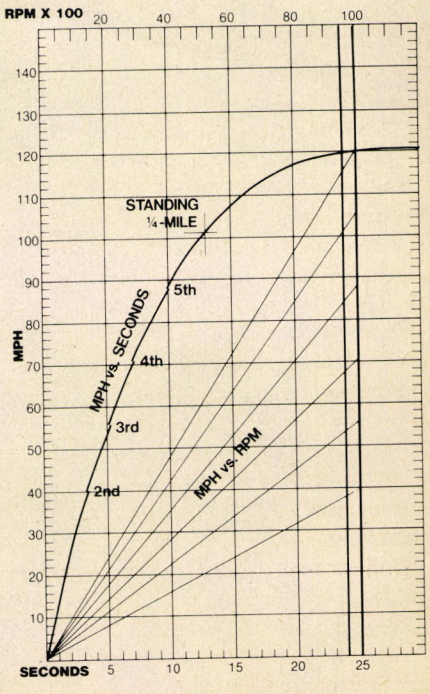


COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs	Stopping Distance From 60mph, ft.
Yamaha 550 Seca	12.99/101.7	121	418	119
Kawasaki KZ550	13.45/97.1	103	426	150
Honda CB500 Custom	14.12/92.9	102	468	146
Kawasaki KZ650 Custom	13.16/100.2	116	483	125
Honda CB650	13.29/99.9	113	447	131
Suzuki GS450ST	14.09/92.5	100	397	127

PERFORMANCE:





Today, building a motorcycle has become practically a science.

At Honda it's still an art.

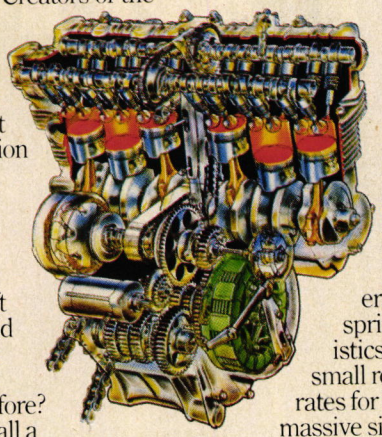
Art?

From the highest of the high tech motorcycle companies? Creators of the Pro-Link™ suspension. Winners of five consecutive European endurance road racing championships. Current Manufacturer's Champion in both American and World open class motocross competition.

Well, what would you call the sculptured form you see on the left hand page? What would you call a machine that takes sport touring to a place it's never been before?

What would you call a motorcycle as breathtakingly beautiful yet technologically sophisticated as the 1981 CBX?

Most likely, you'd call it art.



The mighty CBX six-cylinder engine.

How poetry in motion gets moving.

At Honda, form without function is not considered a virtue. High-performance machinery is built to do just that—perform. Then it is styled to look good doing it.

So beneath the sleekly flowing lines of the CBX is everything you would expect in a high performance sport touring bike. And considerably more. Six, count 'em, six cylinders.

Stainless steel, internally ventilated front disc brakes.

Each with a four-valve Pentroof™ combustion chamber for high combustion efficiency. That's twenty-four in all, in case you're counting valves, too.

Each cylinder is fed by a 28 mm CV carburetor. An accelerator pump aids smooth, no lag acceleration. Ignition is low maintenance transistorized.

And the mighty double overhead camshaft engine exhausts through mighty impressive six-into-two high performance pipes with interconnected chrome megaphone mufflers. For increased mid-range power.

The power that puts the sport in sport touring.

Anything as beautiful as a CBX deserves special handling.

An engine as technologically advanced as a CBX deserves nothing less than the very latest in sophisticated suspension.

The Pro-Link™ suspension system.

A result of Honda racing technology, Pro-Link suspension delivers truly progressive spring and damping characteristics. Low initial rates for small road irregularities. Higher rates for bigger bumps. The massive single shock is both air assisted (with a low pressure warning light) and adjustable with three distinct rebound damping settings.

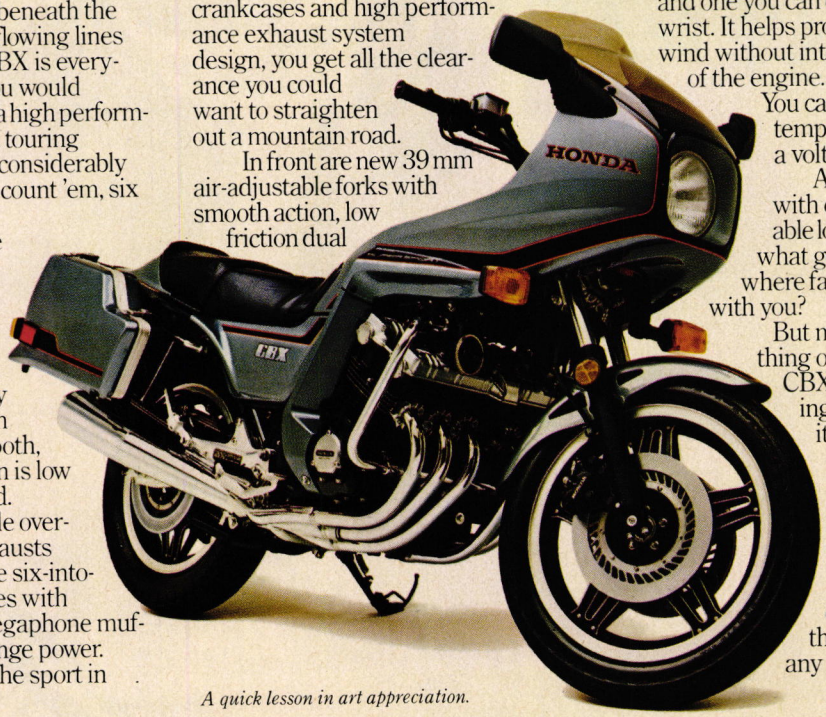
The large extruded aluminum alloy swing arm pivots on ball and needle bearings for long life.

And the unique design of the Pro-Link system allows it to be mounted low in the motorcycle, lowering the center of gravity and improving mass centralization. But don't be mislead, lower c.g. doesn't mean less cornering clearance for the CBX. With its beveled crankcases and high performance exhaust system design, you get all the clearance you could want to straighten out a mountain road.

In front are new 39 mm air-adjustable forks with smooth action, low friction dual Syntallic™ bushings. A new frame design utilizes different steering head geometry and decreased trail.

The rubber on the road is V-rated, tubeless and wrapped around wider-than-ever, highlighted aluminum alloy ComStar™ wheels.

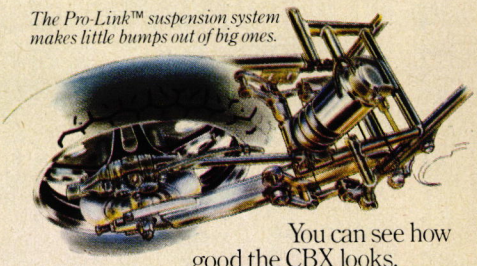
And for the very important part of going, stopping, new stainless steel, internally ventilated disc brakes. A Honda exclusive with new twin piston calipers.



A quick lesson in art appreciation.

Now for the most beautiful part, the beautiful part.

The Pro-Link™ suspension system makes little bumps out of big ones.



You can see how good the CBX looks.

But what's really beautiful is that all those handsome pieces aren't just there for looks.

The sport touring fairing was designed with an air spoiler for both rider comfort and aerodynamic efficiency. It has one storage compartment you can lock, and one you can open with a flick of the wrist. It helps protect you from the wind without interfering with the cooling of the engine.

You can order options like an air temperature gauge, altimeter, a voltmeter and a quartz clock.

And the CBX even comes with color matched, detachable locking saddlebags. Because what good is getting somewhere fast if you can't take anything with you?

But maybe the most beautiful thing of all about the 1981 CBX is that it is a piece of rolling artwork. Who knows, it may even appreciate in value as you appreciate it over the years.

But whether it does or not, you have the security of knowing that there's one thing you can do with this piece of art that you can't do with any other.

You can ride it.

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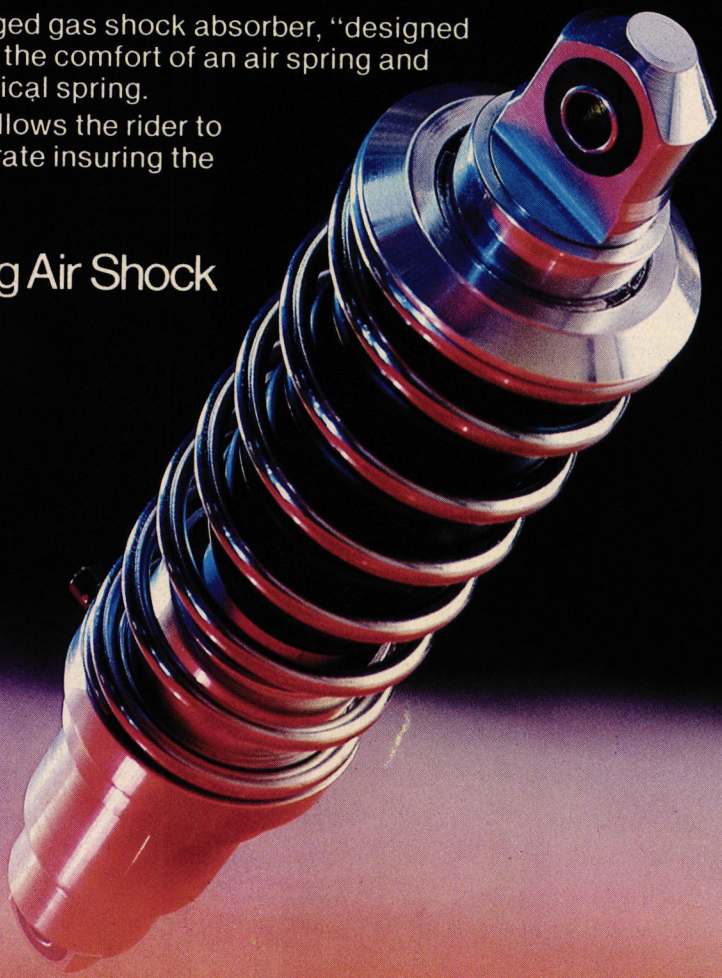
FORCE 1 Touring Air Shock



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Cycle Guide's

SPECIAL EDITION

SUSPENSION

The most complete collection of aftermarket suspension components ever assembled.

Suspensions, someone once noted, are like money: Nobody is ever happy with what he's got. With today's new motorcycles, though, there's not much for anyone to get unhappy about. The manufacturers seem, with rare exception, committed to equipping their motorcycles with front forks and rear shocks that are at least competent, even on the low-buck, entry-level models; and in many cases, such as with certain motocross bikes and high-performance street machines, the suspensions are just short of phenomenal.

Despite that, motorcycles in dire need of suspension first-aid still exist in great numbers. And because they do, the suspension aftermarket remains a lucrative place in which to do business for a large number of manufacturers and suppliers. What's more, since OEM suspensions have become so spectacularly efficient, the aftermarket people have had to stay on their technological toes just to be able to offer something that's as good *as*, let alone better *than*, what comes bolted onto a new motorcycle. And it's to their credit that they've generally been quite successful, both in terms of sales and in the quality of their products.

Nevertheless, the sophistication of OEM suspensionry surely must prompt a lot of people to wonder why, if the stock stuff is so great, anyone would bother replacing it. There are plenty of good reasons, such as: Not everyone owns a new or late-model motorcycle; in fact, most own *older* machines. Or, perhaps the OEM equipment has, like most mechanical things over a period of time, simply worn out. Or some or all of the existing suspension pieces on your motorcycle may not be up to the particular task you're subjecting them to, such as if you were to load up a general-purpose bike for serious long-distance touring, or convert a stone-stock street bike into a peg-dragging canyon racer, or attempt to bring a year-old motocross bike up to current specifications. It matters not *why*, however; the point is that for one reason or another, you can find yourself in the market for anything ranging from a new set of shock springs to an entire suspension-system transplant.

Yep. That's the point, all right. But the problem is what to do about it. Because there is, as you are about to see, an incredibly wide variety of aftermarket suspension gear available, each brand claiming to be the best or to have the most. And unless you're already a suspension engineer or have a degree in fluid dynamics, it's damned tough to figure out what model of which fork or shock will give your bike what you think it should have. Thankfully, most aftermarket suspension outfits have ways of helping you make those kinds of decisions, ranging from impressively detailed catalogs and step-by-step suspension-tuning guides to personalized service that's just as close as your mailbox. Whatever the options offered by any of the manufacturers, though, the point is to *use* them. The more you know about suspensions before you buy into them, the better chance you have of achieving the suspension of your dreams.

Don't, however, let your fantasies outstrip reality. Which is a polite way of suggesting that you design your suspension modifications within the parameters dictated by your budget and your abilities, as well as by the recommendations of the component manufacturers. You're dabbling in an exacting science when you start messing around with forks and shocks, and the effects of many seemingly insignificant changes can have serious, often detrimental, unplanned effects on the motorcycle's entire behavior. This is one area where the process of trial and error usually ends up with the emphasis on "error" if the "trial" is not conducted by someone with reasonable knowledge of the subject. So to avoid spending a lot of money to achieve little in the way of positive results, make sure that either you or your advisor in any suspension experiments have at least *some* basic qualifications for the job.

You can, of course, help avoid costly mistakes simply by using some common sense. Don't, for instance, try to improve the suspension on a motorcycle that already handles above-average by shopping for bargains. Chances are that any low-dollar items you could bolt in place would not yield enough significant improvements to justify even their economical price. Face it: On a good machine, big improvements are going to cost big bucks. Further, don't try to make an exceptionally good-handling model handle even better, *regardless* of cost, unless you have concrete evidence that the modifications in question actually work. If you've read about such changes in a reputable magazine or have heard about them from a good dealership, or if a friend's bike responded favorably to some specific suspension fiddling, you're probably on pretty safe ground.

It's also good advice to properly match the components to their intended usage and not to over- or under-engineer any part of the suspension. Bargain-basement shocks, for example, won't improve much of anything on a serious, long-travel motocross racer. Indeed, motocross is one area where the quality of result is almost directly proportional to the cost of the component. On the other hand, you don't need high-tech, nitrogen-charged, remote-reservoir racing-only shocks on your street bike—unless you're either trying for some

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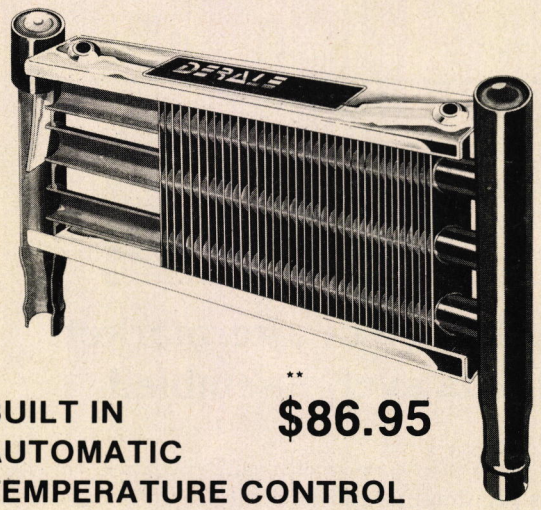

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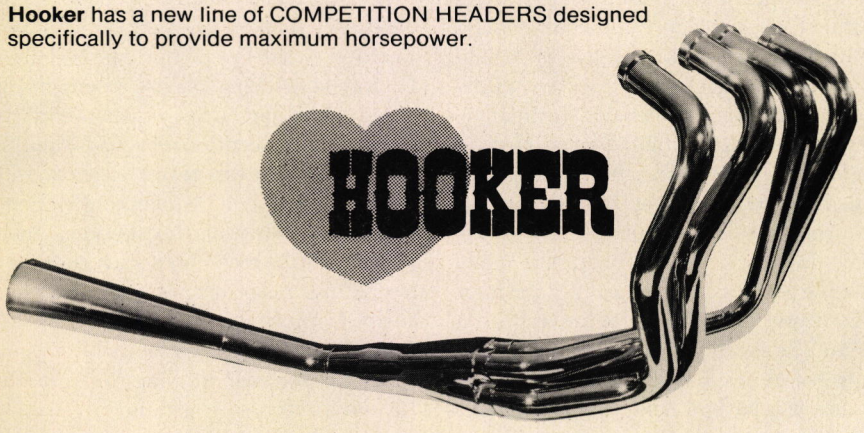

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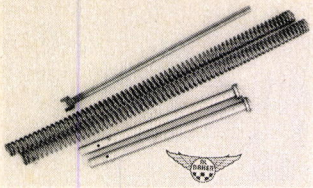
bizarre visual effect or just have a lot of extra cash burning a hole in your pocket.

You'll also be well-advised not to inadvertently turn your motorcycle into a highly specialized device that does one thing uncommonly well but all others poorly. You may be able to engineer TZ750-like handling into your street bike while at the same time making the ride so horrid as to render the machine useless for any other sort of riding. Conversely, you assuredly can find the right mix of pieces to give a touring bike a Buick-esque plush-o-matic ride, but it still ought to be able to negotiate a sweeping turn at moderate speed without wallowing around like a hippo in heat.

Last, but certainly not least, concern yourself with avoiding two classic mistakes made by many riders who engage in do-it-yourself suspension modifications: (1) using shocks that have an eye-to-eye length different than the originals; and (2) using a fork (either just the legs or the whole fork assembly) that has a different steering-axis-to-axle offset. Changing either dimension also changes the motorcycle's steering geometry, you see; and unless that's something you *want* to do, and unless you have some inkling beforehand as to how and why you wish to change the geometry, *don't*. Not even the best motorcycle engineers in the world can simply look at a bike's steering geometry, or even ride the machine, and automatically know how much change in head angle or front-wheel trail is needed to correct a problem or achieve a different feel. So it's safe to assume that you can't, either.

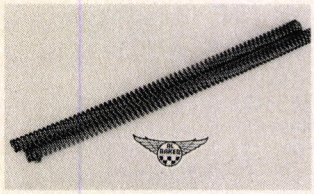
After reading all of these "don'ts," however, you may conclude that we're recommending that you never change a thing as far as your motorcycle's suspension is concerned. But that's not true. All that we're advising you to do is think *before* you open your wallet; and that advice comes after years of observation by members of our staff who have watched the ways in which so many people have spent so much time and money just to end up with a suspension that's no better than what they started out with.

So *you* start out, then, by getting hold of the appropriate instructional catalogs or fork/shock tuning guides (the very best of which is S&W's Suspension Engineering Handbook, $4.95 plus local tax from S&W) offered by the companies that make the pieces you're interested in. Read them closely and adhere to the guidelines they suggest. Because somewhere in the following pages is the solution to the suspension problem that's been bugging you for some time now. So dig in and have a closer look.



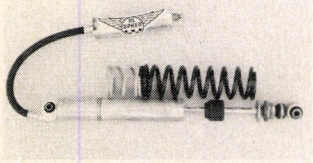
AL BAKER RACING AND DEVELOPMENT FORK KITS

Features: Designed to improve standard Fork performance through increased travel and altered damping characteristics; developed through racetrack and shock dyno research. Kits include specially wound springs, damper rods or modification information, plus all necessary snap rings and hardware for installation, with complete instructions. Kits vary depending on what particular components are required to accomplish improvement. It is necessary for some fork components to be machined at Al Baker's shop. $34.99 to $150.



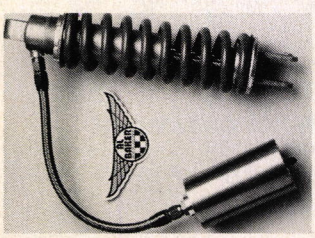
AL BAKER RACING AND DEVELOPMENT FORK SPRINGS

Features: Progressive coil springs designed to provide smooth low-speed action along with improved high-speed stability. All springs are wound from Swedish music wire for long life and accurate spring rates. $5.95 to $23.95.



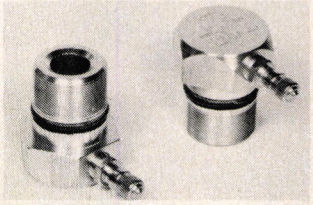
AL BAKER RACING AND DEVELOPMENT RACER AND PRO MONOSHOCK MODIFICATIONS

Features: Replacing the stock damping valves with hand-made parts and remachining the damper shaft for a maximum of 12 inches of rear wheel travel. Professional reassembly with an accessory reservoir increases oil capacity to resist fading. Baker's secret "shock sauce" is designed to provide more consistent damping action than the stock oil. Foam bump cushions, dual-rate spring set-ups and large (red racer) or larger (gold pro) remote reservoirs are also part of the packages. $124.95 to 139.95. Lesser individual modifications are available.



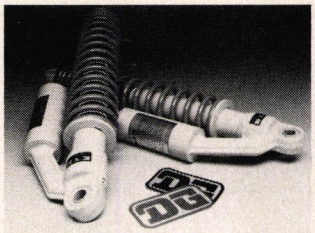
AL BAKER RACING AND DEVELOPMENT PRO-LINK MODIFICATIONS

Features: Extensive internal modifications using replacement valving designed to eliminate inconsistent damping qualities sometimes found in mass-produced Pro-Link units. Available for '81 Honda CR125/250/450 complete with a complement of different rate springs to suit most any track and rider preferences. Developed through track and dyno research. $N.A.



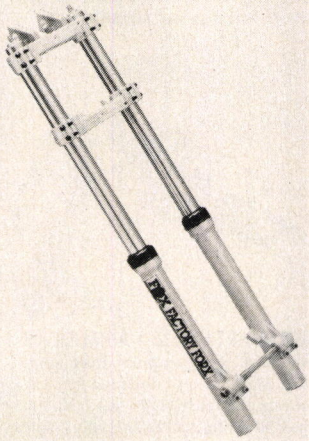
DG PERFORMANCE AIR FORK CAPS

Features: Designed to improve front end performance by allowing a tunable range of air adjustments from soft to firm. These gold-anodized caps are available in several configurations to fit most popular street and dirt motorcycles. $16.



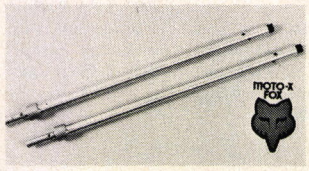
DG PERFORMANCE/KYB PIGGYBACK MINI-SHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-charged De Carbon-type mini-motocross and off-road shocks with floating piston, integral reservoir, three external rebound damping adjustments and 12.5mm-diameter shafts. They are non-rebuildable and can be fitted with three different progressive springs stocked by DG. Their 14.5-inch length makes them suitable for mounting on RM80s, CR80s and '79-'80 KX80s. $149.50.



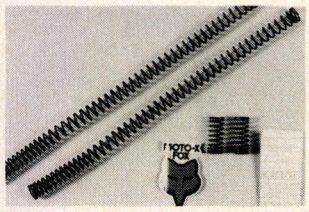
FOX FACTORY FORX

Features: Forks use a combination gas/coil spring suspension with three optional main springs and three optional negative springs, as well as two optional rebound damping valves to allow a wide range of adjustment possibilities for varying machine weights, track conditions and rider preferences. Aluminum alloy clamps and sliders are forged (rather than cast) for maximum strength with minimum weight. Large 44mm-diameter legs (the industry's largest) are heat-treated and machined from thin-wall tubing. Available in either 12- or 13-inch travel versions to fit most Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha motocrossers from 125cc on up. Completely rebuildable. $459.



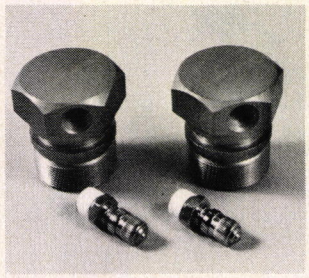
FOX FACTORY FORK KITS

Features: Designed to offer improved damping with special spring-valve damping rods, lightweight internal fork springs and air filler caps to provide increased adjustability. Available to fit some Betor, Ceriani, Honda, Husqvarna, Kawasaki, Maico, Marzocchi, Suzuki and Yamaha forks. $26.95 to $50.



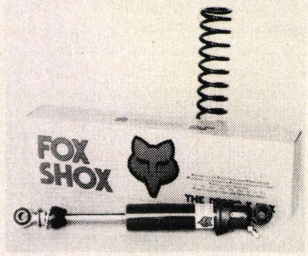
FOX FACTORY GRAND PRIX SPRING KITS

Features: Progressive-design springs developed in Europe for use with factory spring/air forks. These springs claim to increase fork travel between 0.5 and 0.75 inches. Available to fit Maico Magnums and most Suzuki and Yamaha motocrossers. $13.95 to $18.95.



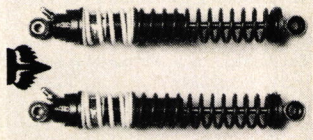
FOX FACTORY GAS FORK CAPS

Features: Machined aluminum alloy replacement caps facilitate air or nitrogen gas filling and adjusting to achieve the desired compression resistance. $10.95 to $19.95.



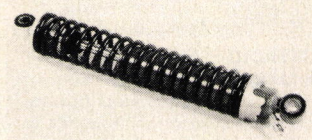
FOX STREET SHOX

Features: Designed for both racing and street applications. Large, 1/2-inch diameter hardened and chrome-plated shafts are used with bronze pistons and bearings, teflon piston rings and polyurethane shaft seals. Two damping rates are available in lengths from 13 to 14.25 inches. Designed to fit most popular bikes including Honda's clevis-type mounting. Several spring rates are available. $119.



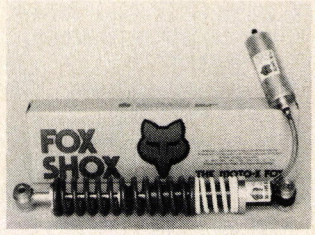
FOX TRIALS SHOX

Features: Designed for Observed Trials competition with the help of trials ace Lane Leavitt. These gas-pressurized emulsion shocks share features with all of the basic Fox Shox line such as full 1/2-inch diameter shafts, bronze bearings and pistons and teflon piston rings, but with the special damping and spring characteristics best suited for plonking. Lengths include 13, 13.50, 14.25 and 15.37 inches. A variety of dual-rate Fox springs are available to suit riding style, weight and machine. $121.



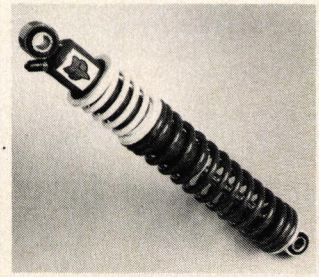
FOX SHORTTRACK SHOX

Features: Designed to provide the specialized damping and springing characteristics required by flattrack racers. Dick Mann, Mert Lawwill, Rick Hocking and John Gennai were among the many who helped develop this shock. A variety of springs and two damping rates are available for these 13-inch shocks. Completely rebuildable. $119.



FOX MINI-MOTOCROSS SHOX

Features: DeCarbon-type remote reservoir shocks designed especially for the XR75/80, YZ80, CR80 and RM80 mini-motocrossers. Like the other Fox Shox, these feature hardened, chrome-plated, large diameter shafts, bronze pistons and bearings, teflon piston rings and polyurethane shaft seals. Lengths include 13, 13.50, 14.25, 14.75 and 15 inches. Several dual-rate spring combinations are available. Complete with owner's manual. Fully rebuildable. $105.



FOX SHOX

Features: Gas-pressurized emulsion-type

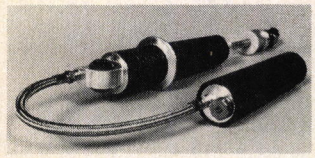
shocks with 1/2-inch diameter hardened and chrome-plated shafts, bronze piston and bearing, teflon piston ring, polyurethane shaft seal and internally adjustable damping. The original Fox Shox were developed during the '75 Trans-AMA Series, and their design has been updated several times. Suggested for use on motocross and enduro bikes with less than nine inches of travel. Completely rebuildable. All Fox suspension components come complete with an owner's manual to aid in rebuilding and adjusting. Lengths range from 13 to 17.5 inches; four rebound damping rates. A wide selection of spring combinations is available. $119. Optional remote reservoirs are $60.

FOX FACTORY SHOCKS

Features: A new piston design is claimed to provide fade-free performance from ambient temperatures to over 300 degrees. Internally tunable compression and rebound damping, as well as low-and high-speed movement. All adjustments are independent of one another and no exotic tools are needed. The progressive dual-rate spring selection includes six progressive-wound short springs, seven straight-wound long springs, and four progressive long springs. All models are completely rebuildable. Spherical heim joints are incorporated in the remote and piggyback reservoir shocks, but not the non-reservoir model. Available in 14.25, 14.75, 15.25, 15.75, 16.50, 17.00, 17.50 and 18.00-inch lengths. $242.10 (non-reservoir), $286.50 (piggyback), $302.10 (remote reservoir).

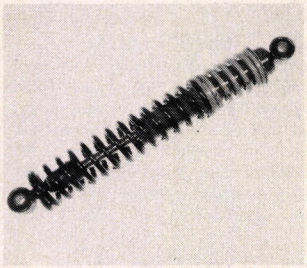
FOX FACTORY AIRSHOX

Features: Dual-stage adjustable air-spring rates allow Airshox to be tuned for varying machine weights, track conditions and rider preferences. They are rebuildable for replacement of worn parts, adjusting air-spring progression rates or to modify damping rates. Available in 14.25, 14.75, 15.12, 15.75, 16.25, 16.75, 17.00 and 17.75-inch lengths. $290. In order to get the correct gas pressures and to monitor them accurately, Moto-X Fox highly recommends the use of one of their three types of pressure gauges. $29.95 to $39.50.



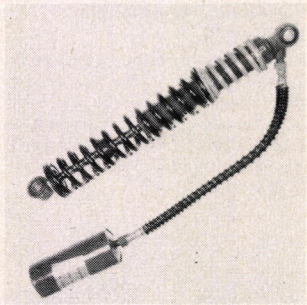
FOX FACTORY MONOSHOCK

Features: De Carbon-type remote reservoir monoshock unit for YZ125/250/465 G and H models. Precision machined, aircraft quality aluminum alloy reservoir and shock unit with Fox's exclusive "CD Adjust" allowing compression damping to be tuned with the click of a knob on the reservoir. 40-position externally adjustable rebound damping and up to two inches of rear wheel travel adjustment (one inch increase and decrease from stock). $335. There is also a new model for the YZ80H with internally adjustable damping and two-stage springs. $165. Full-sized units to fit '81 Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki single shockers available soon.



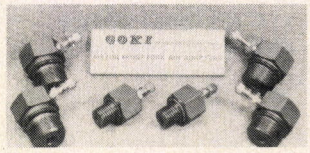
GIRLING GAS SHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-charged emulsion-type shocks for dirt or street use with three damping rates, adjustable spring preload and dual-rate springs. They are available to fit most machines with a wide variety of springs to choose from. Lengths are 12.8, 13.4, 14.2, and 15.0 inches. $110 to $120.



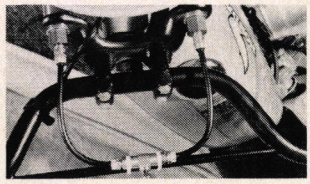
GIRLING REMOTE RESERVOIR GAS SHOCKS

Features: Designed primarily for off-road use, these nitrogen-charged DeCarbon-style shocks share most of the damping and spring characteristics with their non-reservoir counterparts. $180.



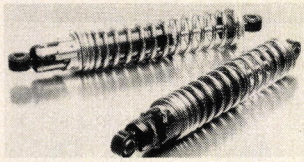
GOKI AIR/OIL FORK CAPS

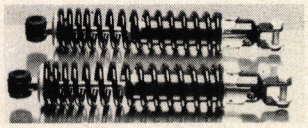
Features: Designed to work in conjunction with conventional coil springs to enable riders to compensate for varying loads and conditions on street or dirt. Kits available for Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, Yamaha and KTM bikes and Marzocchi, Ceriani and Betor forks. $12.95 to $17.95.



GOKI EQUAL-FILL AIR SYSTEM

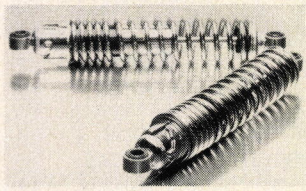
Features: Works in conjunction with all American-made air fork caps and Japanese filler caps. Designed to provide a simple and convenient system for adding or subtracting air pressure from forks. Comes complete with all necessary hardware. $11.95.





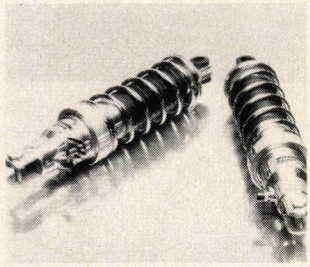
INTERPART SS SHOCKS

Features: Designed as original equipment replacement items for street bikes. Rebuildable (except for Harley models) and internally adjustable for compression and rebound damping. Available for many popular street machines in high-gloss black finish with chrome five-way adjustable preload collars and either black or chrome springs. The clevis-type mount model pictured is specially designed for large displacement Hondas. $69.95. Springs $24.95 (black), $38.95 (chrome).



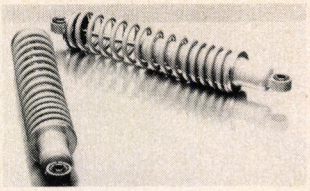
INTERPART HARLEY-DAVIDSON SHOCKS

Features: Heavy-duty double-wall emulsion-type shocks in a variety of styles and configurations to fit virtually any Harley. Special mounting stud adapter kits are necessary for mounting some shocks. All shocks feature chrome-plated bodies and springs, and springs are included in the price. A 90-day guarantee protects the purchaser from manufacturer's defects. $89.95. Mounting stud kits $29.95.



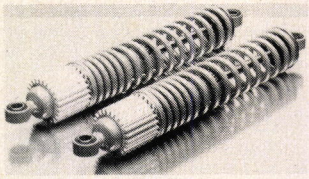
INTERPART FORCE 1 AIRSHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-pressurized single-tube emulsion-type designed for street, touring and roadracing. Uses both a mechanical spring and the naturally progressive action of compressed air. Shaft is 9/16-inch in diameter and the body is formed of extruded aluminum alloy. Models are available to fit most Harley, BMW and Japanese bikes. Force 1 options include a handlebar mounted air pressure monitoring gauge and a soon-to-be-released onboard air filler compressor to facilitate in-motion increases or decreases in pressure. Interpart Force 1s carry a one-year guarantee against manufacturer's defects. $195. Bar-mounted pressure gauge/bleeder valve $49.95.



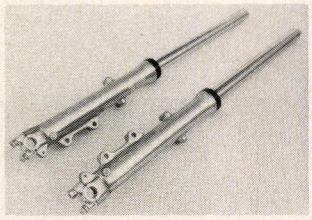
INTERPART MX SHOCKS

Features: Double-wall oil/spring-type shocks designed for off-road and motocross riding. Rebuildable and internally adjustable for both compression and rebound damping. Finished in Interpart's bright orange paint. 90-day guarantee against manufacturer 's defects. Available in sizes 10.75 to 14.25 inches to fit most popular dual-shocked dirt bikes. $69.95. Springs $24.95 (black), $38.95 (chrome).



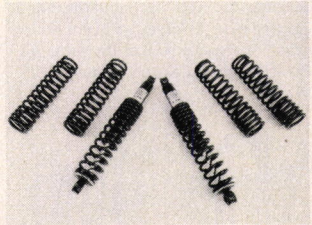
INTERPART LTG SHOCKS

Features: Double-wall low-pressure gas cell design for off-road, street and roadracing. These Long Travel Gas shocks have the largest oil capacity of any of Interpart's shocks. Lengths and configurations available to fit most all popular machines. Pressed aluminum alloy fins aid cooling. All models are completely rebuildable, internally adjustable in both compression and rebound damping modes, and carry a 90-day guarantee against manufacturer's defects. $104.95. Springs $39.95.



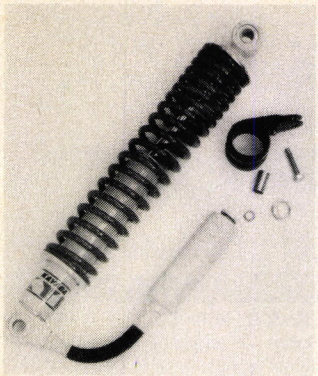
KYB/YOSHIMURA FORKS

Features: Designed for street and roadracing Kawasakis and Suzukis. Air pressure, oil level and oil viscosity provide adjustability. Slightly longer than stock to allow a limited amount of up or down adjustment in triple clamps for varying trail dimensions. 36mm-diameter tubes for Kawasaki KZ650 and KZ1000, or 37mm to fit Suzuki GS1000 models. $535.



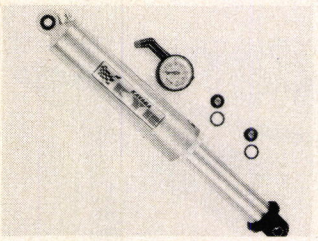
KYB/YOSHIMURA SHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-pressurized street and roadracing shocks with six-position adjustable damping, five spring preload settings and a clevis-type bottom mount. Length is 13 inches only. Especially suited for mid lay-down position. Bolt-on to Suzuki and Honda, Kawasaki and others must modify swingarm mounts. Can also be adjusted to work in upright position. $299.95.



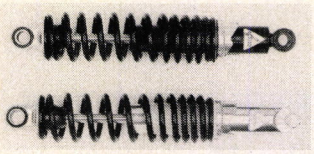
KYB M-SERIES MINI SHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-pressurized De Carbon-type shock with floating piston, remote reservoir, two rebound damping adjustments, three spring preload settings and a 4.25-inch stroke. 13.5-inch length to fit Honda CR80, Kawasaki KX80 and Suzuki RM80 mini-motocrossers. $130.



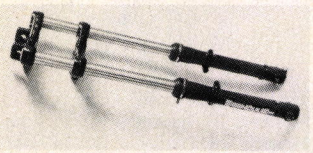
KYB F-SERIES SHOCKS

Features: Air-mechanical shocks with three adjustable rebound damping settings, flexible upper Heim-joint mounting eye and gold hard-anodized aluminum alloy body. These are lighter than conventional shock/spring combinations and are rebuildable. Comes complete with air gauge, mounting hardware and installation instructions. Lengths are 15.5, 15.9, 16.3 and 17.5 inches. $295.



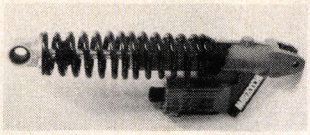
KONI 76P TOURING SHOCKS

Features: Emulsion-type designed for street and touring use with aluminum or steel bodies depending on application. Three rates of progressive springs are available and there are three spring preload adjustments offered. Available for most Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki, Suzuki and BMW motorcycles. $157.20.



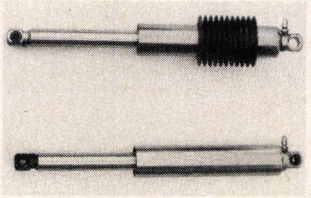
MARZOCCHI DIRTTRACK/ STREET/ROADRACING FORKS

Features: Developed especially for U.S. dirttrack competition. Standard equipment on Harley's XR750 racer. Claimed to be suited for high-performance road use, and roadracing, as well. Constructed of aircraft-quality aluminum alloy with chrome-moly steel 35mm-diameter tubes. These 5.3-inch travel forks are available with three different stems and either a 15 or 17mm axle. $285.



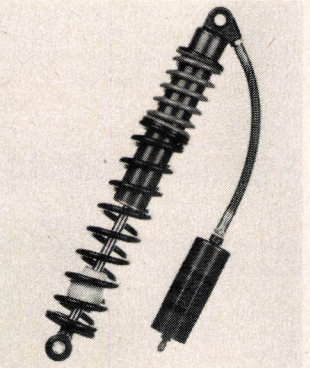
MARZOCCHI STRADA ROAD AND AGT TRIALS SHOCKS

Features: Stradas (pictured) are aluminum-bodied, air or gas adjustable, integral reservoir-type street shocks. Five types are available to fit most popular road bikes. Shaft diameter is 12mm and there are five spring preload positions. $140.64. AGT Trials shocks were developed by Malcolm Rathmell during the last few Trials seasons. These aluminum-bodied air- or gas-pressurized shocks are similar in basic design to the Strada street/racing shocks, but with the necessary trials-type damping and 10mm shafts. $139.



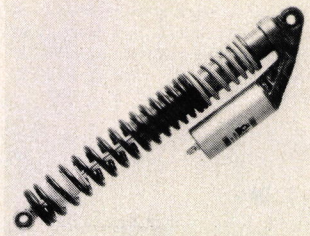
MOTOSPORT GAS SPRING SHOCKS

Features: Gas-pressurized, air-spring design with progressive compression and rebound damping, a one-inch diameter shaft and double dirt scrapers. Available with or without pressed-on aluminum alloy cooling fins. Travel lengths are 4.5, 5.0, 5.5 and 6.0 inches. Lengths (eye to eye) range from 14.25 to 17.5 inches in .5-inch increments. $190 (without fins), $224.50 (with fins). Optional 600 psi gas bottle with gauge and core depressor air check, $99.50.



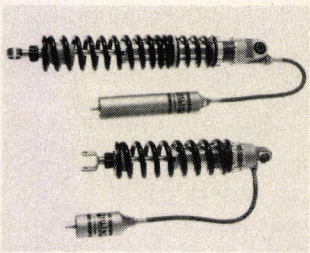
OHLINS REMOTE RESERVOIR GAS SHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-charged, single-wall remote reservoir motocross and off-road shocks with infinitely and independently internally adjustable compression and rebound damping rates to suit virtually all track conditions and rider preferences. A piston sealing ring of bronze-impregnated teflon expands at the same calculated rate as the shock body. Dual-rate (double spring), straight-rate and progressive wound springs are available for some applications, and a range of spring rates and foam bump rubbers are available for all models. In addition, they feature Swedish steel and construction and are completely rebuildable. Heim-joint-type eyes are used at both ends. Available in basic damping configurations and lengths for Can-Am, Honda, Husqvarna, KTM, Maico and Suzuki. $275 to $300.



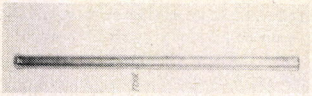
OHLINS PIGGYBACK RESERVOIR GAS SHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-charged, single-wall, integral reservoir motocross and off-road shocks with infinitely and independently internally adjustable compression and rebound damping rates. Completely rebuildable. Virtually the same as the remote reservoir models but with single-unit design for easy mounting. Available for most popular off-road competition motorcycles. Used by 1980 250cc World Motocross Champion Georges Jobe. $325 to $350.



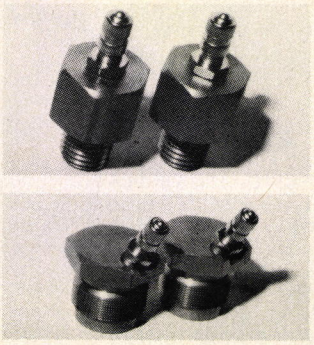
OHLINS SINGLE SHOCK SYSTEM

Features: Nitrogen-pressurized motocross and off-road shocks; completely rebuildable with both internal and external damping adjustments (30 settings). Models to fit '81 Yamaha YZ and IT, Honda CR and XR, Kawasaki KX and Suzuki RM. Spring preload is infinitely adjustable through the use of movable jam nuts. Tested during the 1980 GP season by World Champion Andre Malherbe (Honda) and former 250 World Champion Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha). High quality Swedish steel springs, aluminum alloy reservoirs and fade-free damping. $430.



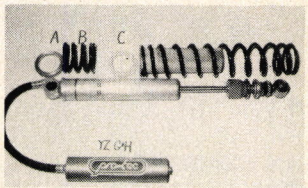
PRO-TEC KAYABA FORK TOOL

Features: A tool that enables quick disassembly of Kayaba forks for cleaning and seal replacement. Design holds damper rod while removing end bolt. For YZ Yamahas '77 to '79 and Suzuki models using Kayaba forks. $9.95.



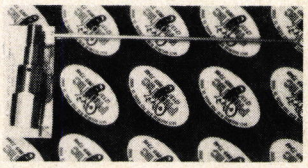
PRO-TEC AIR FORK CAPS

Features: Machined aluminum alloy fork caps to fit a wide variety of dirt and street bikes. Allows addition of air compression progressivity to compensate for additional front-end touring loads or for varying rider preferences off-road. $13.95.



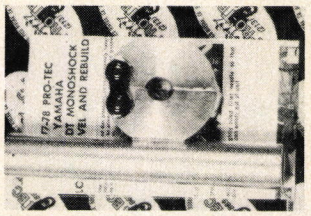
PRO-TEC MONOSHOCK MODIFICATION

Features: Spring installed in conjunction with deletion of sleeve spacer allows increased suspension travel in YZ/C and X-series Monoshocks. $47.50.



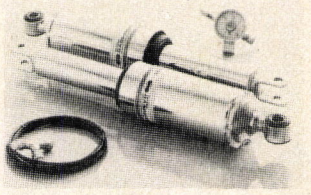
PRO-TEC MONOSHOCK TRAVEL EXTENDER

Features: A simple component which effectively extends the length of your '77-'79 monoshock unit, also raising the machine's rear-end height somewhat. $24.95.



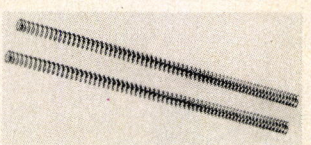
PRO-TEC MONOSHOCK TOOL

Features: Aids in assembly and disassembly of all sizes and years of monoshock units. $15.95.



REEDER GASPRING ST-160 AIR SHOCKS

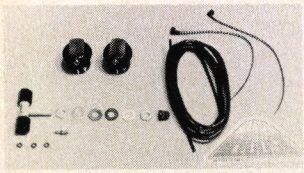
Features: Air-adjustable, nitrogen-charged design with chrome-plated piston rod, urethane oil seals, thermostatically controlled bi-directional valving and a 160-psi rating. Units are heliarc-welded and available only in chrome finish. Includes air line, air valve, gauge unit and all necessary hardware. $124.95.



S & W FORK SPRINGS

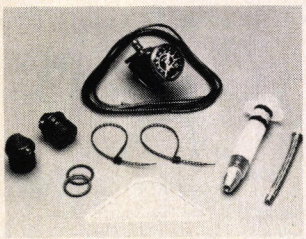
Features: A wide variety of spring sizes in various rates, and in both straight-rate and progressive wound designs, are available from S&W. All springs are wound from chrome silicone steel spring wire and are unconditionally guaranteed to not take a

set (sack) or break. They are designed to compress all the way to coil bind without overstressing. $13.95 to $23.95.



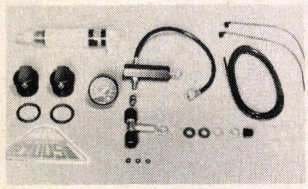
S & W ECONOMY AIR BOOST KIT

Features: A complete system to fill forks with air to supplement springs. Provides slight added support for heavier loads as well as a degree of adjustability from soft to firm for street and dirt bikes. $29.95.



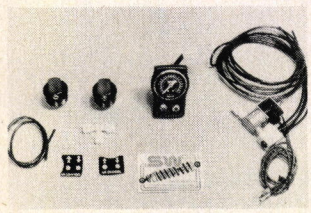
S&W TOURING AIR BOOST KIT

Features: Street/Touring kit comes complete with fork caps, handlebar-mount gauge, mini-pump and all necessary hardware and instructions. Allows you to increase the load-carrying capacity of forks and monitor pressure. $59.95.



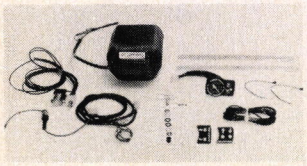
S&W OFF-ROAD AIR BOOST KIT

Features: Near identical to touring kit but provides quickly detachable pressure gauge for easy air pressure checks and adjustments. $59.95.



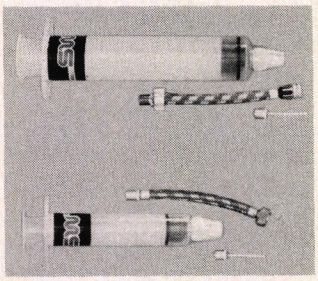
S&W FRONT AIR COMMAND SYSTEM

Features: An air adjustment system for forks to be used with S&W's Air Command rear system. Kit enables you to increase or decrease fork air pressure to match load and road conditions. Included in the kit is a 0 to 100 psi gauge, a solenoid air valve which controls the pressure, front wiring harness, and optional air caps. $109.95.



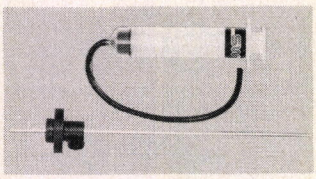
S&W AIR REAR COMMAND SYSTEM

Features: A complete, on-board air supply system which enables you to raise or lower your rear air shock pressure. Pressure is monitored on a 0-to-200 psi gauge. Compressor unit is compact and weighs 5.5 lbs. Designed especially for touring riders. $214.95.



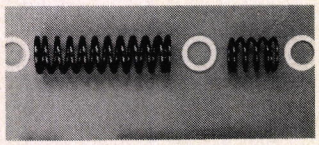
S&W MINI AND MAXI AIR PUMPS

Features: For pressurizing air forks. Mini version offers less volume per stroke, but greater pressure is available. Can be used to inflate tires if you've got forearms like Popeye. $7.95 to $9.95.



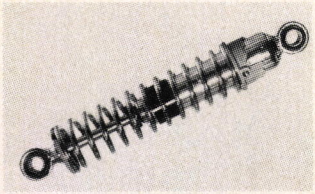
S&W FORK OIL LEVEL ADJUSTER KIT

Features: Service kit provides method of altering the volume of the fork air chamber (versus oil volume). Available with or without air pump. $17.95, or $27.95 with air pump.



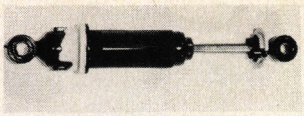
S&W STANDARD, SPECIAL AND MONOSHOCK SPRINGS

Features: Most of S&W's springs are made of chrome silicone steel spring wire, and all are unconditionally guaranteed for life against taking a set (sacking) or breaking. Besides a wide selection of straight-rate and progressive springs for shocks, S&W also offers a range of springs for Koni, Girling and Yamaha's monoshock. The mono springs are available in a variety of rates in both dual- and triple-rate (two or three spring) configurations for optimum tuning possibilities. $36.95.



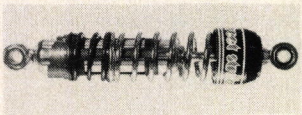
S&W D-SERIES SHOCKS

Features: S&W's most popular original equipment replacement shock for street bikes. Emulsion-type with five position spring preload, 7/16-inch chrome-plated shaft and an assortment of straight-rate and progressive-wound springs to meet most any machine application. Lengths from 11 to 14.25 inches to fit most popular street bikes. $74.95 (black), $89.95 (chrome). Springs $17.95 to $25.95.



S&W H-SERIES HEAVY-DUTY FREON SHOCKS

Features: Freon cell design with six-stage damping, five-position spring preload adjustment and 1/2-inch heat-treated, chrome-plated shaft. All S&W shocks have a one-year guarantee covering material and workmanship. A wide selection of spring rates are available. Lengths from 12.50 to 14.56 inches to fit most street bikes. $94.95 (black), $109.95 (chrome). Springs, $22.95.

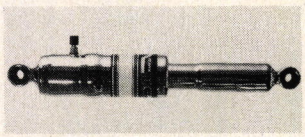


S&W STREET STROKERS

Features: S&W's most sophisticated dual-spring shock for high-performance street bikes. Six-stage damping, five-position spring preload, a 1/2-inch hardened, chrome-plated shaft and a one-year guarantee on material and workmanship. Lengths from 12.50 to 14.25 inches to fit most street machines. $99.95 (black), $115.95 (chrome). Springs, $36.95 to $39.95.

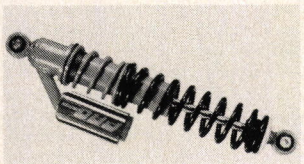
S&W FE-SERIES STROKER

Features: Gas-cell design off-road shocks offering up to 6.41-inches of stroke, velocity sensitive damping, five spring preload adjustments, a 1/2-inch heat-treated, chrome-plated shaft and a one-year guarantee on material and workmanship. Lengths from 14 to 18.25 inches to suit most off-road bike applications. A wide variety of unconditionally guaranteed springs are also available. $99.95. Springs, $36.95.



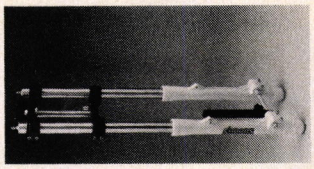
S&W A & AT-SERIES AIR SHOCKS

Features: Air adjustable touring shocks with triple-lip main shaft seal, six-stage damping, flexible rubber bushings and a one-year guarantee covering material and workmanship. Uses air and an infinitely variable spring to help provide maximum touring comfort. Lengths from 12.35 to 14.25 inches with various mount configurations available to suit adaptation to many popular machines. $129.95 to $134.95 (black), $149.95 to $154.95 (chrome).



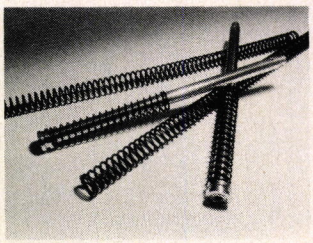
S&W PRO STROKERS

Features: Double-wall De Carbon-type with low-pressure (40 psi) nitrogen-charged piggy-back reservoir, aluminum finning, 1/2-inch hardened, chrome-plated shaft, dual bottoming cushions, polyurethane eye bushings and dual springs. Damping rates are internally adjustable by replacing valving components. These are rebuildable and guaranteed for one year against material and workmanship defects. Lengths from 12.5 to 19 inches are available, as are a wide variety of spring rate combinations. $199.95, including springs.



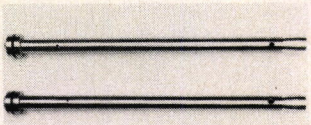
SIMMONS FORKS

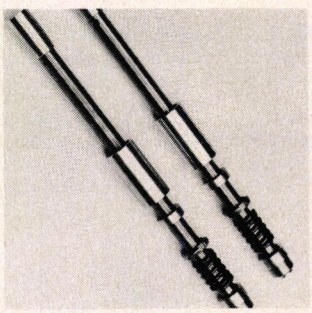
Feature: Soft-rate coil springs are supplemented by air pressure to achieve a dual-rate effect. Legs are 1.5-inches in diameter and made from 4130 heat-treated chromemoly steel. Crowns are forged aluminum alloy. Available in 10-, 11- and 12-inch travel models. Damping is controlled by a tapered rod. Complete assemblies are available to fit most off-road bikes. Adjustability is achieved through various spring rates, oil viscosities and air pressures. $398 (with crowns), $344.07 (without crowns).



SIMMONS FORK KITS

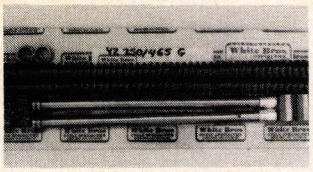
Features: Designed to improve damping action and increase travel of Suzuki, Yamaha and Kawasaki motocross forks. Complete with new damper rod design, primary and negative spring and installation and tuning instructions. Detailed graphs show effects of changes in air pressure and oil volume. $24.99 to $59.95.





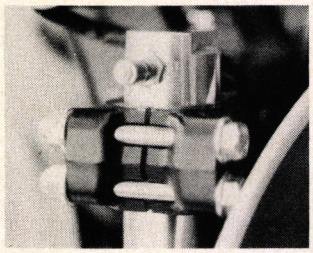
TERRYCABLE/TERRY FORK KITS

Features: Designed to improve stock damping characteristics and increase travel from .5 to 2.5 inches (depending on machine) on most all popular dirt bikes. The 33-series kit (above) contains damper rods, cones, longer travel, different damping orifices, and air caps if your bike did not come with them stock. The 44-series (below) includes the aforementioned items plus a complete new valve train and a set of longer springs. The 55-series is made just for Honda, and the fork tubes must be sent in for machining and kit installation. $45 (33), $59 (44) and $85 (55).



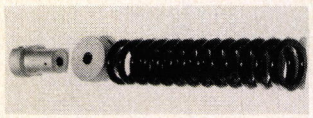
WHITE BROS. WORKS FORK KITS

Features: Developed through testing with professional motocross and off-road riders. Kits are designed to offer improved damping action, increased travel and an improved ride quality over stock components. Kits include new coil springs, two lengths of preload spacers, rebound springs, damping rods, Bel-Ray LT suspension fluid and installation instructions. Complete kits are available to fit a number of popular two-and four-stroke dirt and dual-purpose bikes. $57.95 to $97.95.



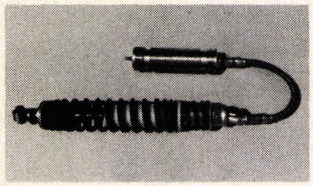
WHITE BROS. EXTENDED AIR CAPS

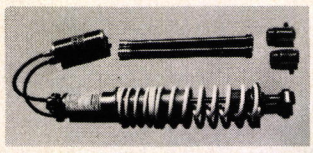
Features: Machined of aircraft-quality aluminum alloy and designed to increase oil volume and air space and allow an extra inch of fork tube position adjustment. Available to fit many popular off-road and dual-purpose bikes. $12.95 to $19.95.



WHITE BROS 8″ TRAVEL MONOSHOCK KIT

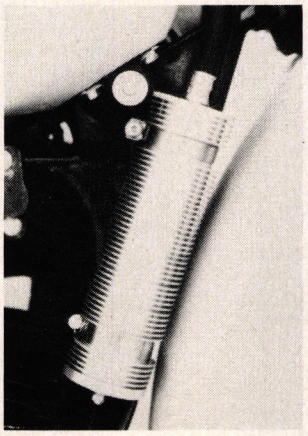
Features: Designed for DT125, 175, 250 and 400 D,E and F model monoshocks to increase suspension travel for better ride quality. Includes all necessary hardware. $44.95. Similar kits for earlier monos (8.5-inch travel) $32.95 to $49.95.

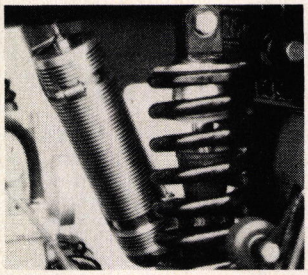




WHITE BROS. MONOSHOCK MODIFICATIONS

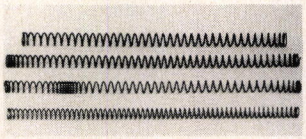
Features: The White Bros. have a full line of modification kits available for virtually any monoshock, including the TT/XT250 thumper. All kits are designed to improve overall ride quality and increase wheel travel. Shown above is the YZ125/250/400 modified unit, complete with increased oil and cooling capacity aluminum reservoir. Below is the 10-inch travel TT250 complete suspension kit. Dual-rate springs in several rates are also available for most shocks. White Bros. modify valving to their specifications, machine the shock body for multi-progressive springing and rebuild your shock to your personal riding needs. Prices vary from model to model but a close figure is around $108 plus $79.95 for the optional reservoir unit.





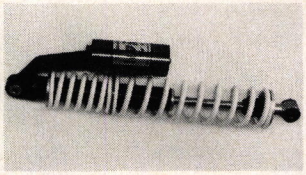
WHITE BROS. UNI-TRAK AND MONOSHOCK MODIFICATIONS

Features: Installation of a large-capacity aluminum alloy reservoir allows improved cooling of shock oil. A nitrogen adjustment varies compression and rebound damping characteristics. An increased-diameter coupling hose hastens fluid movement and reduces heat build-up. $79.95. Price is for reservoir only, labor is around $50.



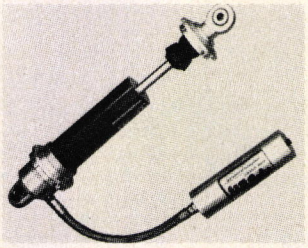
WHITE POWER FORK SPRINGS

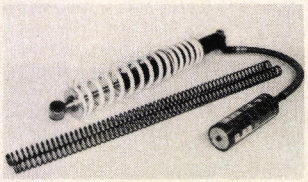
Features: Wound, plastic coated German coil springs, engineered to provide improved fork action characteristics over stock components. Developed through racetrack testing in Europe. Available for most popular motocross and off-road machines. $40 to $60.



WHITE POWER G.P. SHOCKS

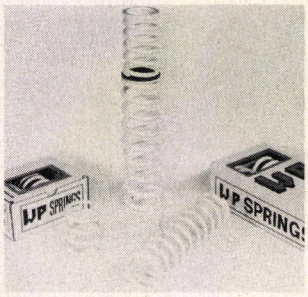
Features: Single-wall, De Carbon integral reservoir, nitrogen-pressurized units, with speed sensitive damping, to fit most popular motocross and off-road bikes. Hand-assembled of quality material and tested both in the factory in Holland and on the G.P. tracks of Europe. Sold in Europe for four years, they are now available in the U.S. due to increased production. One-year warranty on labor only. A selection of dual-rate springs is available for various track and rider preferences. $365.





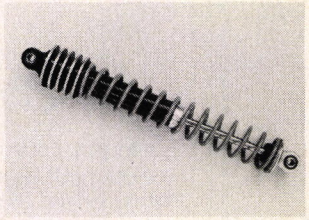
WHITE POWER SOLO SHOCKS

Features: Single-wall, De Carbon-type, remote reservoir, nitrogen-pressurized single shock units with speed sensitive damping, designed to provide improved shock action over stock '81 Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha suspension units. Complete with plastic coated, German-made springs and one-year warranty. A scaled-down version is also available for the single shock '81 KX80 and YZ80 mini-motocrossers. $395 (regular sizes). Mini solo shocks are available only in kit form, which includes specially-wound German fork springs. $219.



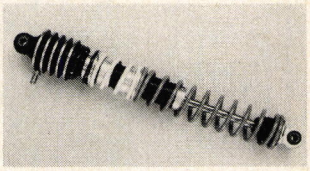
WHITE POWER MONO AND SINGLE SHOCK SPRINGS

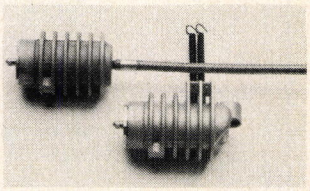
Features: A complete selection of plastic coated, German steel, dual-rate spring combinations to fit Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha single shockers. A similar selection is available to fit White Power's Solo shocks. $66. Titanium springs available with special order, extra.



WORKS PERFORMANCE ORIGINAL SHOCKS

Features: Single-wall design with an internally adjustable progressive valving system, 1/2-inch stainless steel shaft, and either single or compounded dual-rate springs. Bodies are steel with cast aluminum-alloy cooling fins and Kal-Gard anti-corrosion coating. Available for all off-road bikes with a large selection of springs, and in lengths from 11.75 to 18.75 inches. Designed to provide an improvement over stock shocks at a reasonable price. All Works shocks have a 90-day guarantee covering parts and labor, and are fully rebuildable. Price varies with spring selection. $125 to $155.





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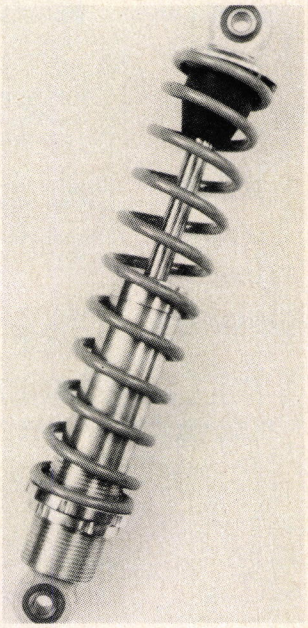
Features: Single-wall, gas-pressurized off-road shocks with an internally adjustable progressive valving system and optional remote or bolt-on (Supercrossers) reservoirs with nitrogen gas-filled bladders. Designed to offer a performance increase over the Original Works shocks. Lighter damping action is a benefit of the gas pressurization, and provides improved wheel control. Available in lengths to fit all popular dirt bikes with a wide selection of springs to choose from. Fully rebuildable. $195 to $225 (without reservoirs), $270 to $300 (with reservoirs). YZ and KX80 mini shocks, $150, with triple-rate springs.



WORKS PERFORMANCE DIRT TRACKER SHOCKS

Features: Nitrogen-pressurized, single-wall shocks developed for AMA Grand National Championship dirttrack racing. All-aluminum bodies with infinitely adjustable spring preload through dual locking rings. Progressive valving system utilizes compression and rebound rates that are exclusive to this shock only. Works Dirt Trackers are completely rebuildable. $220.

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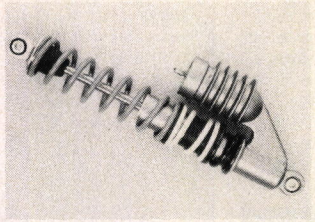

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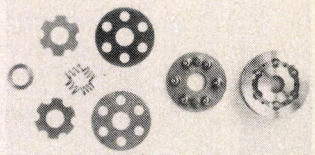
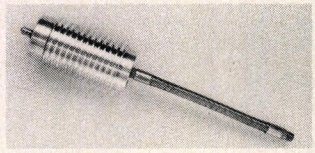
Features: Works top-of-the-line single-wall, nitrogen-pressurized (in rubber bladder), off-road and motocross shocks with an internally adjustable progressive valving system. Claimed to be three pounds lighter than their Supercrosser predecessors. Fitted with swivel-joint eyelets, a 220,000 psi billet steel shaft, and compounded dual- or triple-rate springs with PVC spring spacers and crossover rings. Fully rebuildable to suit track conditions and rider preferences. A wide selection of springs are available for all Works shocks. $340.





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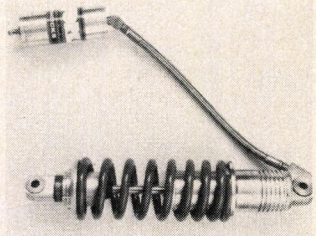

WORKS PERFORMANCE PRO-LINK AND UNI-TRAK SHOCK

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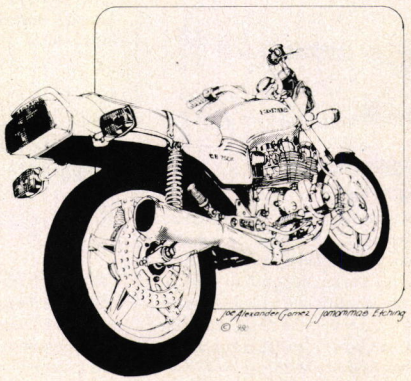

SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Race Courses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

EDITED BY JEFF BURTT

Has-Beens Hustle At Houston

Former champs 2, challengers 0.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 PATRICK BEHAR

• Tradition dictates Houston's position on the AMA Grand National calendar. But even though the doubleheader has been the AMA seasonal kick-off since 1968, it's not a true indicator of what's in store for the rest of the eight-month, 29-race season. The shorttrack and TT limber up the riders for the months of racing ahead, but the real warfare begins with the first oval race, which will be the Sacramento mile in early April.

But Houston had significance for this year's two winners. The shorttrack winner, Jay Springsteen, and TT victor, Steve Eklund, were considered has-beens at various times last year because of inconsistent showings. The two former Grand National champions started 1981 right, carting off 20 points apiece for each race win. In addition to first-place points, Springsteen garnered second-place in the TT, and Eklund was only three places behind the Harley-man at the two-stroke-dominated

Continued

shorttrack on Saturday night.

One person who wasn't surprised by Springsteen's performance was Harley-Davidson team manager Dick O'Brien. During a pre-season forecast, OB was quick to point out that his star racer–and three-time AMA champ–hadn't been hampered by his persistent and mysterious illness since Ascot, the final race of last season. And when Springer is healthy, he's hard to beat. But O'Brien failed to realize that the rigors of racing didn't follow Springsteen home during the off-season. The true test of his seemingly race-related illness would be Houston '81. Prognosis after Houston: The patient is doing fine.

Eklund's story slightly parallels Springsteen's. Although he wasn't plagued by illness in 1980, last year's defending champ nonetheless carried an albatross around his neck the entire year. Plain and simple, it was bad luck that kept Eklund out of victory circle until the season's final race at Ascot. At one point in 1980, he indicated that a possible retirement might follow the '80 season; the expenses of racing far outweighed his earnings. And when you're losing, retirement sometimes spells financial and psychological bliss. But the Ascot finish changed his mind. And with Houston's sweet success—his 14th career win—Eklund has set his sights on regaining the title he lost last year. He has the Harley-Davidson one-two factory punch of Springsteen and Randy Goss, the current champ, to fight, though.

There appears to be another sleeping factory giant poised to attack the Grand National circuit, too. Honda has stealthily slipped into the struggle, and seems to crave being No. 1 in Class C as well as in motorcycle sales. As ambitious as its race plans might be, Honda remained tight-lipped at Houston regarding the state of development of its oval racer. Even so, everyone was aware that the CX500 flattracker spent the winter in the Orient for a crash course in Class C martial arts—American style. The CX500 is essential to the team's plans to chase the No. 1 plate, since oval races constitute more than 50 percent of the race schedule.

The Honda assault, thus far, has been subtle: Houston bikes were prepared for Mickey Fay, Jeff Haney and Freddie Spencer. Fay and Haney have been a part of the Honda roundy-round effort the past couple of years, with Fay winning the Houston TT in 1979 on an XR500. But it was Spencer's Texas presence that had pit-people whispering and asking why Honda had come to Houston with CR250R-based shorttrackers and XR500 TT bikes. The obvious answer was that American Honda was going for No. 1. And with Fast Freddie Spencer—possibly the best raw talent on American dirt *and* tarmac since Kenny Roberts—doing the riding, a title chase isn't too far-fetched.

The bikes were typical Honda: immaculately prepared and fast. But you could still smell fresh dye on the riders' leathers, indicating that the project was a rush-rush deal. As serious as the effort was at Houston, though, there was no statement from Honda's race department concerning plans to actually go for No. 1.

Team manager Dennis McKay responded to

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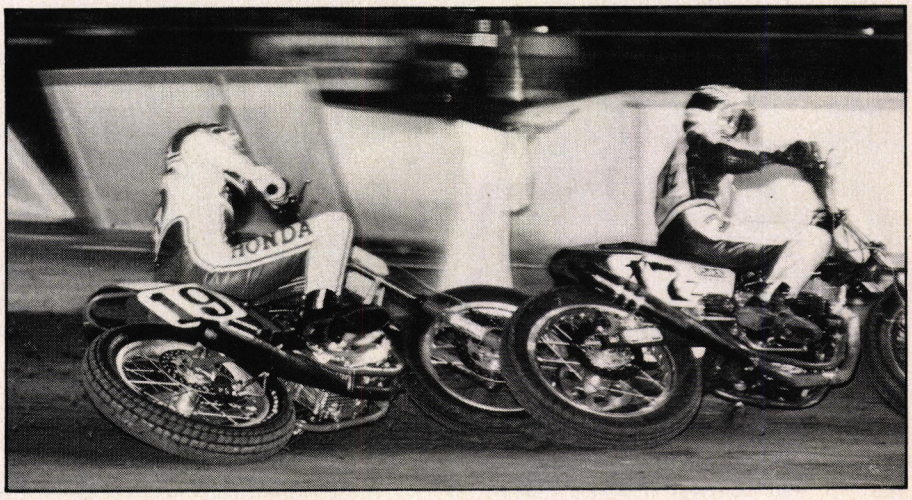
The Astrodome: Where the season begins

Points here are considered a bonus.



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Freddie Spencer crashing in the ST

Too much bad luck for a title chase.

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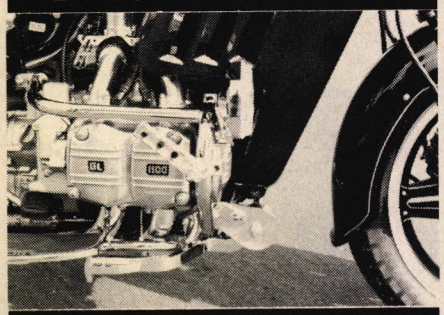

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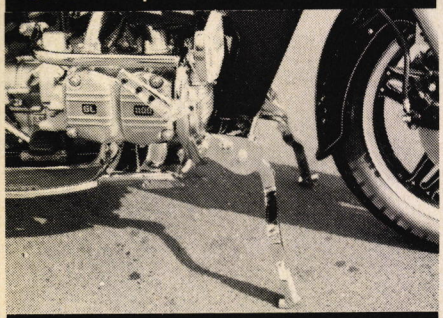

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New champ Randy and former champ Jay

The most formidable team in racing.

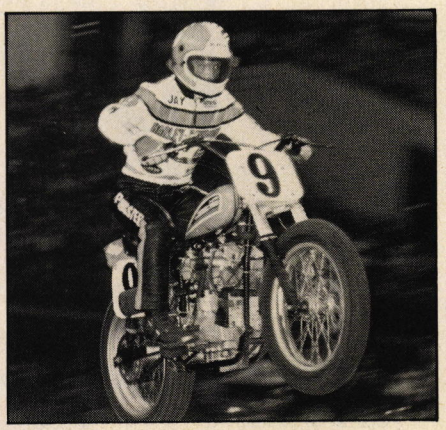
questions as though he had been trained by experienced Japanese GP veterans, who are infamous for their secrecy. Question, Mr. McKay: What size is the CX500 going to be? We hear rumors of a 750. Answer: "It'll be a 500."

So far, so good. But then, nobody really says exactly what size a race engine is. Especially people from Honda. Next question: Will Spencer go for the title? "I don't want to make an announcement, then have Honda look foolish because the bike isn't competitive." So Spencer will race the CX500, then? "It all depends on when the CX500 gets back from Japan, and how competitive it is." End of discussion, as far as McKay is concerned. And beginning of speculation in the pits.

A line of reasoning: In all likelihood, Honda wanted to get some Houston bonus points for Spencer, since the might of the Harley XR750—King of summer racing—isn't as pronounced at Houston. The XR500 single won Houston once and it could repeat. So thought Honda prior to Houston, probably. A 40-point head start, plus another 20 for winning Daytona the following month would put Spencer in the driver's seat when it came time to pit the CX against the Harleys on the oval tracks. And even if the CX500 proved to be only a high-place finisher rather than a winner on the ovals—no big deal. With his roadracer, Spencer could whittle away at the point advantage Springsteen and Goss enjoyed from H-D oval victories. And since there are no Harleys for roadraces, of which there are six on the schedule (seven, if Golden State is run in September), Spencer could gain upward of 120 points on the Harley riders. Keeping in mind a total of five more shorttracks and TTs left, the title wouldn't be out of Spencer's reach.

But Springsteen, as loose as ever in the Houston victory circle, summed it up best as to what the first weekend means to the overall Winston Pro Series picture: "Points here are bonus points. It's all luck." It was 36 points worth of luck for him, and zero points of luck for Spencer and Honda. Maybe they're saving their little bit of luck for the CX500.

—Dain Gingerelli



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Springsteen gathering a TT second

Getting a jump on the points race.

Springsteen celebrating the win

Making like Sylvester Stallone.

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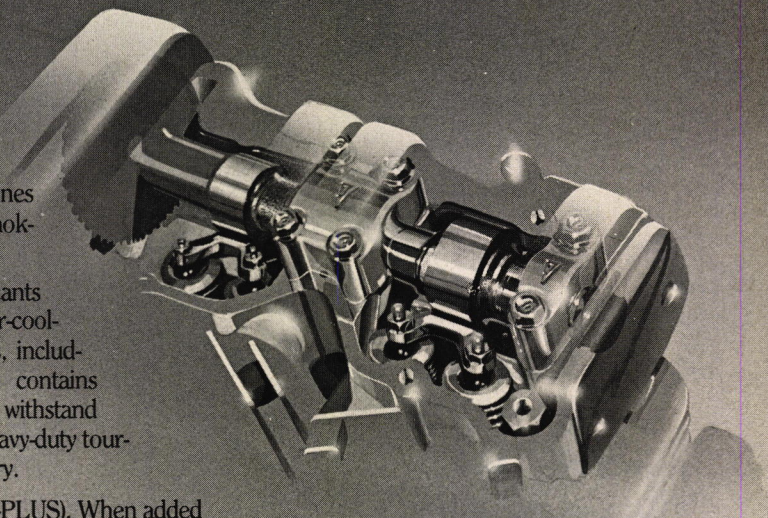

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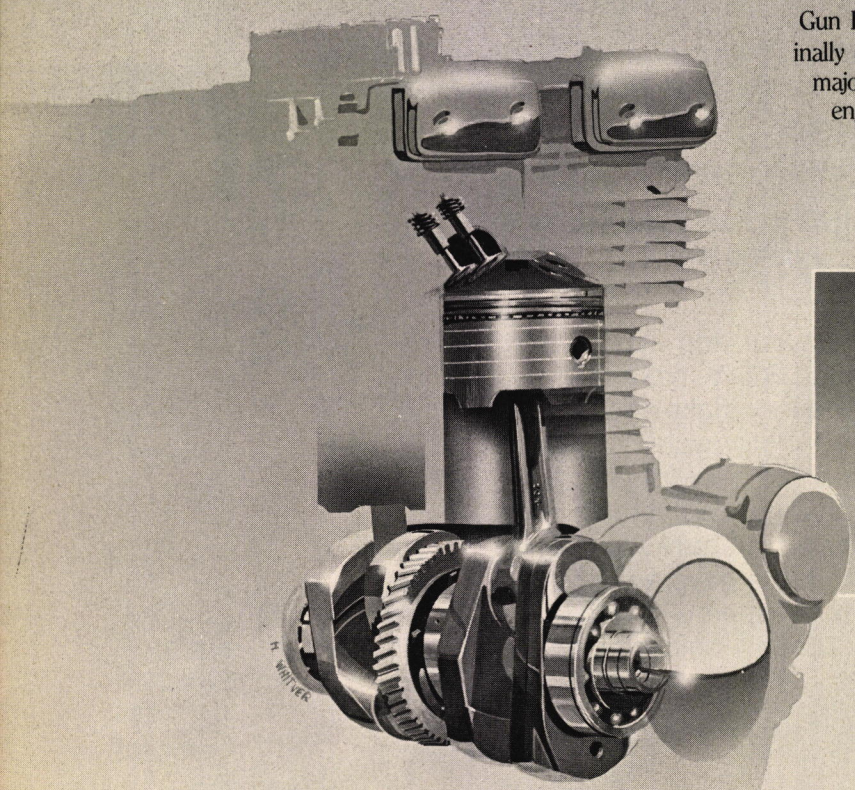

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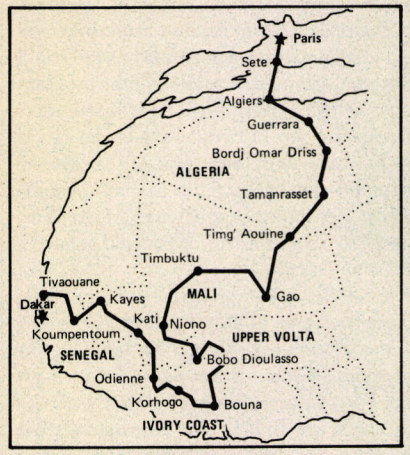
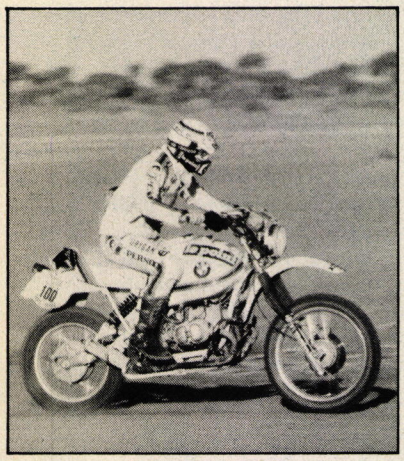
Pit Bits

• Frenchman Hubert Auriol, riding a BMW R80GS, has won the **Paris-to-Dakar** off-road rally, the Foreign Legion's version of the Baja 1000. The grueling 6000-mile course runs from Paris to Algiers, traverses the Atlas mountains, crosses the Sahara, **plunges** into the West African jungle and ends up in Dakar, capital city of Senegal.



Auriol, 28, and his BMW France-sponsored R80GS **shafted** a 100-rider field by three hours, but total elapsed time for the event was not posted. Although only 27 competitors completed the circuit, all non-finishers were, fortunately, accounted for at the end of the rally. And BMW officials had no comment on how Auriol managed to cross the Mediterranean.



Gnu proving ground for BMW

Shaft-drive conquers the veldt.

• The Rich Get Richer Dept.: PJ1 Products has signed **endorsement** contracts with Kenny Roberts and Hakan Carlqvist, who will represent its **lubricants** in international moto-competition—a first for PJ1. Carlqvist will fly the flag at 500cc MX GPs, with Roberts performing similar duty on the FIM roadrace circuit. In addition, PJ inked Mike Kidd and Jim Filice (of Roberts/Law-

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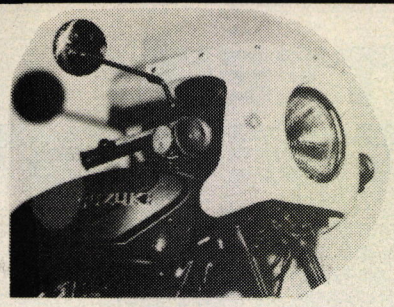

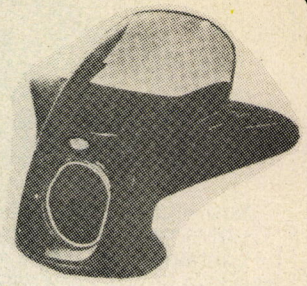

Torque ¼ Fairing

Universal Top Fairing fits most motorcycles. Comes in white or black and choice of clear or smoke or blue shield. Fairing made of ABS plastic which can be painted to match any motorcycle or is attractive the way it is.

Universal mounting brackets are included. This fairing is to be used with low cafe bars.

$61.95

Torque TQ Fairing

The Torque "TQ" Fairing is molded from ABS plastic and is available in black, white and silver. It comes with an attractive smoke windshield and universal mounts making it easy to install on most any model motorcycle. The "TQ" fairing provides shielding from the wind while adding an attractive appearance to the overall looks of the motorcycle.

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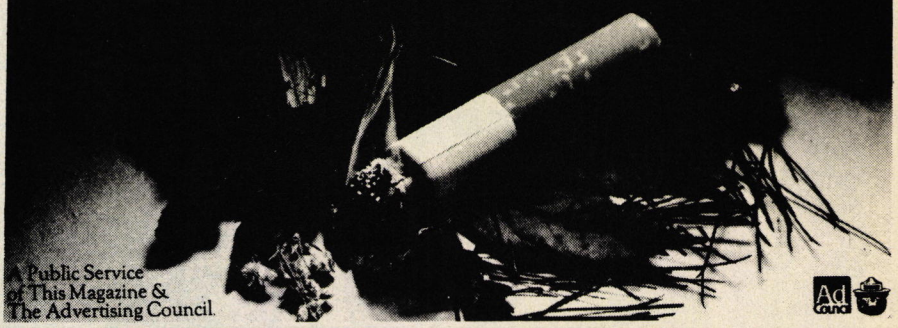
Don't be a trail blazer.



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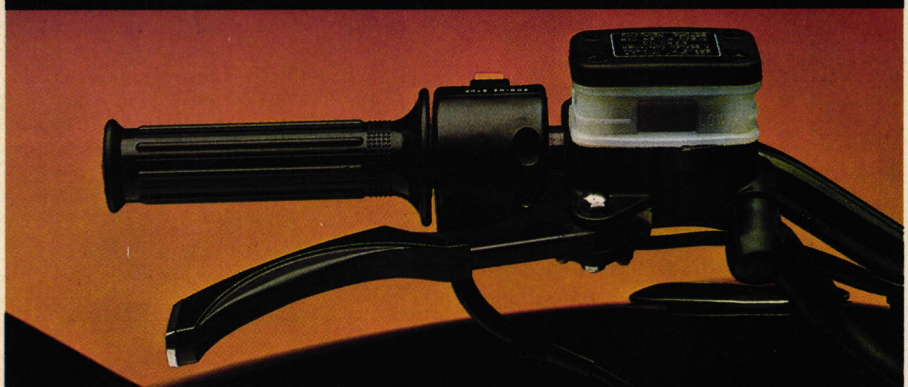

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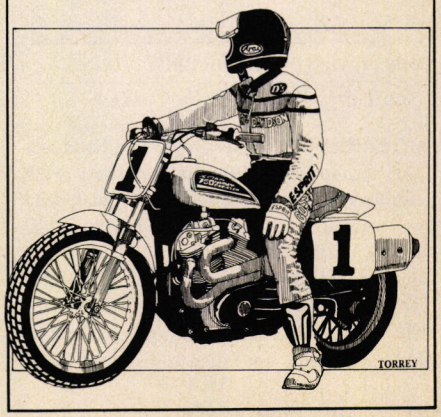
will Racing) to an endorsement **deal** for the AMA Grand National Championship series. All four riders will use the company's lubricants **exclusively,** appear in ads and make personal appearances. And all, save Roberts, will sport logos and **decals** on their leathers and machinery.

• Not to be outdone, Burmah-Castrol, Inc., will **grease** the palms of AMA Winston Pro riders to the tune of **$20,000** in 1981. The contingency program will reward participants who use Castrol lubricants in road-racing (250cc, Formula One, Superbike and Sidecar), and dirttrack events on the Grand National calendar. A **feature** of the program is a "halfway" payoff, which will remunerate the top three riders on the leader board at the **midpoint** of the season. We can see the signs on the backstretch at San Jose already: Become the . . . Champ of . . . Winston Pro . . . and Earn . . . Yourself some . . . Burmah Dough.

• You Read It Here First Dept.: Jim **Filice,** Roberts/Lawwill Racing's bright young star and last year's Grand National Novice phenom, **spells** his last **name** F-i-l-i-c-e—not F-e-l-i-c-e, as has been widely recorded in the moto-press. The **confusion** arose after young Jim rode almost the entire Novice season with his last name misspelled on the back of his **leathers.** Also on his jersey. Seems young Jim was soooo young (*How Young Was He?*) he didn't want to ask his sponsor to ask Bates Leathers to make the **correction.** After riding, and winning, and being photographed the misspelled name stuck, even on this year's official **AMA** Houston **press release,** which took a safe stance and referred to both a Jim Felice and a Jim Filice as the third place finisher in the TT. We, too, ran afoul of the **malaise** last year. No more.

• By the end of this month, Italian GP competitor Loris Reggiani will have a **new mount** because SWM and Bimota have completed an agreement to produce a 250cc roadracer. **Rotax** engines will reportedly be imported and re-worked by SWM, with Bimota realizing chassis and suspension design. Reggiani is under contract to the new **consortium** to organize a support team for, and ride in, the 250cc roadraces remaining



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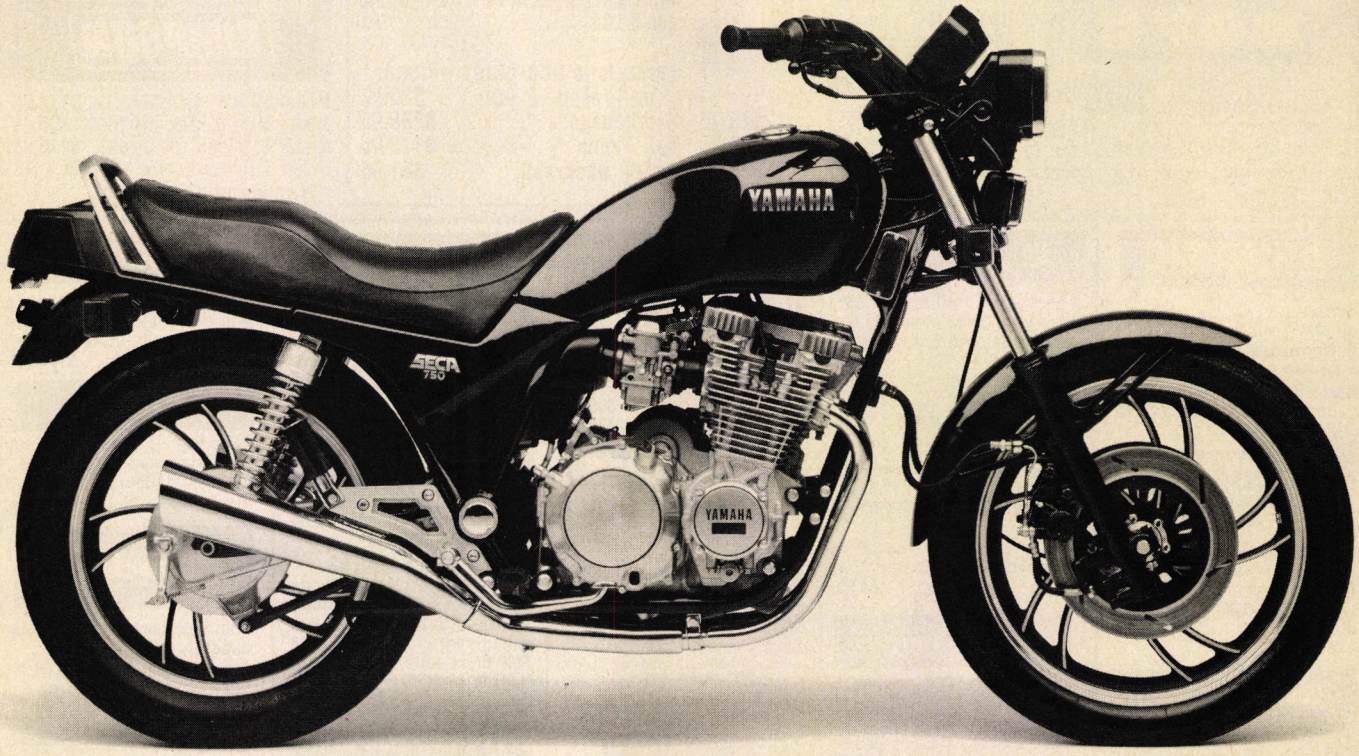
HOT ROD MAGAZINE TURNS 11.97 E.T. WITH YAMAHA'S NEW SECA 750.



(OUR ROAD TESTS ARE GETTING SHORTER AND SHORTER)

It took Hot Rod magazine about a quarter of a mile to get excited over our new Seca 750.

In fact, while testing the Seca for a May cover story, they set an unofficial stock 750 quarter-mile record of 11.97 seconds at 111.25 MPH.

And not only did the shaft-driven Seca shatter the old record, it made ten passes in under 12.3 seconds.

Now, if that's not enough to send you hurrying to your nearest Yamaha dealer, you could wait for the road test in this magazine.

But while you're waiting, just think about what you're missing.

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Star II pro full face $88.95
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Options: Lowers w/striping **$84.95**, pop vents **$11.95**, Fiamm horns **$23.95**, quartz light **$23.95**, tall shield **add $5.95**.

Vetter Sound $75.95
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QUICKSILVER $210.95 complete
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Model 50 full face off-road $96.95
Model 61 sleek for street $115.95
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DIAMOND

This is the **#1 American-made chain** of steel alloy with solid rollers.
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630 Standard $36.95
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Acrylic windshields. The **Slipstreamer II** is the favortie of many tourers and the **SS-20 sport fairing** is great on the street.
Clear shield $69.95
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Plexifairing

This attractive **acrylic windshield** is sleek
Clear **$94.95** Tint **$99.95**

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Smile in the wind and rain with a set of proven foul weather gear. Sealed seams add protection. **2-piece nylon/PVC rainsuit $42.95**
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Latest **cold weather riding gear**
Foam-backed nylon, heavy zippers velcro closures. Black or silver XS to XL and ladies sizes.
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	410-18	51.95
	425/85-18	54.95
	360-19	48.95
	410-19	52.95

"R" compound add $7.95

K181	510-16	$56.95
	510-17	64.95
	460-18	55.95
	510-18	59.95
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Raised white add $8.95
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RB-2	350-18	$51.95
front	325-19	52.95
	350-19	54.95
K112	510-16	$62.95
rear	450-17	61.95
	400-18	58.95
	425/85-18	59.95
	510-18	60.95

Tubeless add $6.95

MICHELIN

M45	350-18	$50.95
	400-18	56.95
	425-18	64.95
	350-19	53.95

PZ-2 add $7.95

GOODYEAR

HST	510-16	$63.95
rear	510-17	65.95
	400-18	64.95
	425-18	66.95
	475-18	67.95
front	325-19	$54.95
	375-19	60.95

Raised white add $10.95

GTII	510-16	$62.95
rear	510-17	64.95
	400-18	58.95
	450-18	60.95
	510-18	64.95
front	350-19	$51.95

Tubeless add $6.95

All first quality—no blems
Prices include F.E.T.

PACIFICO

Great new **Aero fairing** is wind-tunnel designed and weighs only 18 lbs. Just right for middle-weight sport touring.
Black, white or silver $364.95
Shadow Classic b, w, s $449.95

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Slim, styled **ABS saddlebags** from Germany have 1-piece hinge; incl. hardware; black.
Star set 40 liters $359.95
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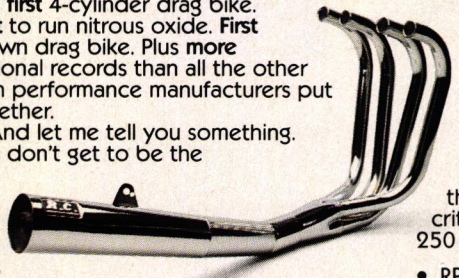
Welcome To The Indoor Quarter Mile

You don't have to be in racing very long to figure out that first is what it's all about. In fact, if you don't figure that out, you won't **be** in racing very long.

I'm Russ Collins, and I've been in racing 25 years. During that time, I've seen a lot of R.C. firsts – and not all of them on the track. The **first** 4-into-1 exhaust system. The **first** 4-cylinder drag bike. **First** to run nitrous oxide. **First** blown drag bike. Plus **more** national records than all the other high performance manufacturers put together.

And let me tell you something. You don't get to be the



No. 1 performance exhaust system manufacturer by being lucky. You get there by having top equipment. We've always had top equipment at R.C. We know, because we've been seeing imitations of it for years. In fact, every other 4-into-1 pipe on the market today is an imitation of the original R.C. system. All of them. What ever they may claim.

But if you want to sort out all the performance claims real quick, ask one simple question. Ask 'em to prove it.

That's what our new Superflow SF800 engine dyno is all about. We call it our indoor quarter mile because we can duplicate track conditions on the test bench. Then we'll give you a computer printout with each exhaust system.

This is the most sophisticated performance analysis system available today. And you're looking at the only one in the motorcycle high performance industry.

In less time than it takes to read this, Superflow measures all the critical elements of performance. In 250 rpm increments.

- RPM
- Torque
- Horsepower
- Airflow
- Fuel flow
- Air/fuel ratio
- Brake specific fuel consumption
- Cylinder head temp.
- Exhaust gas temp.

Compared to my computerized dyno, conventional dynos are strictly Stone Age. Not much better than a water pump hooked up to a meat scale.

It boils down to this: If you buy a high performance system developed on a conventional dyno, you're buying a big maybe. But with R.C., you know exactly what you're getting. Not some cheap imitation. Not some chromed noise-maker. The best. And we can prove it.

All R.C. 4-into-1 high performance exhaust systems; chrome-$219.00, Kal-Gard black-$209.00, plus freight. Prices subject to change. Street legal in all 50 states. All new 1981 R.C. catalog, $3.00. Order toll free.

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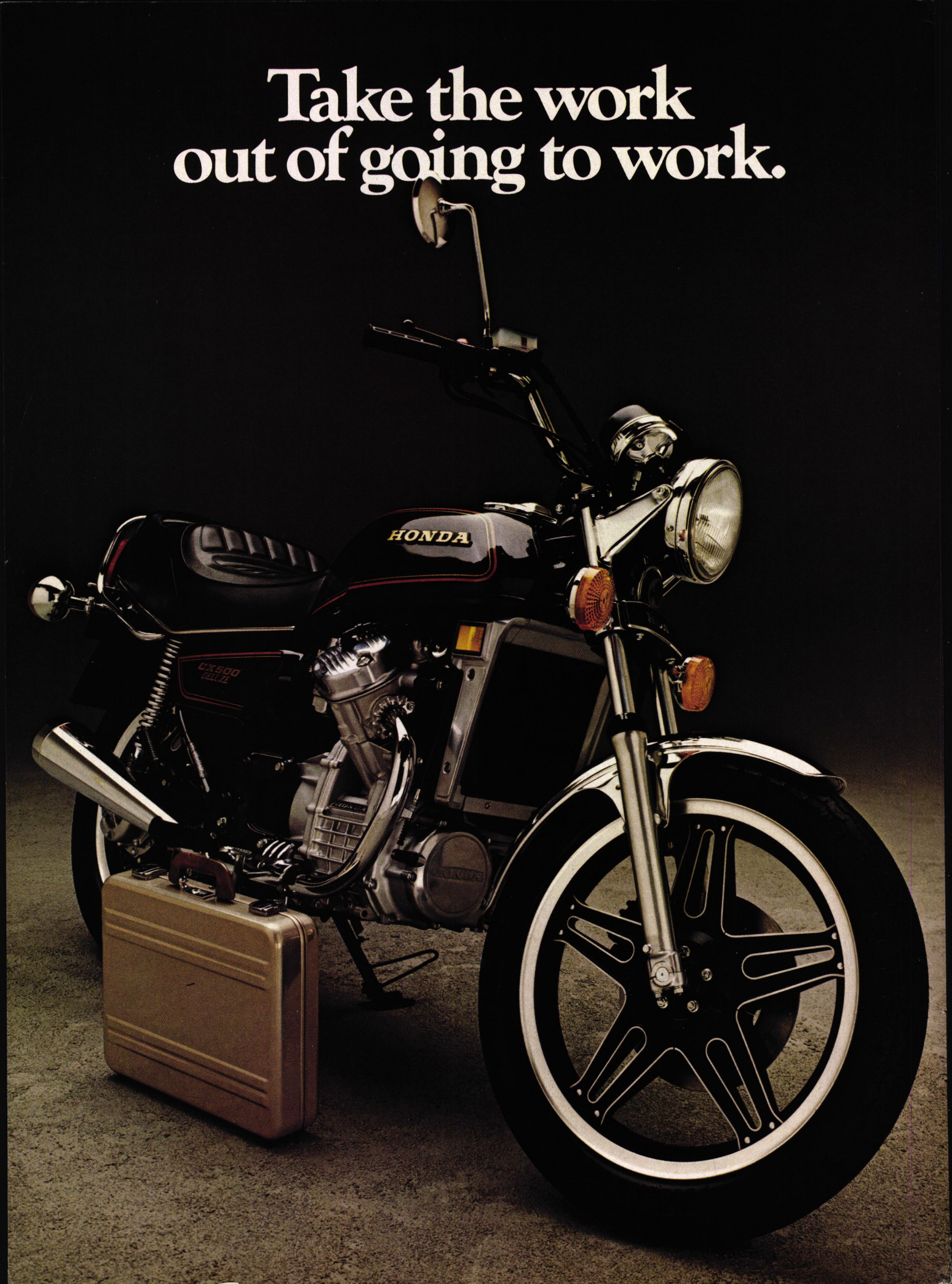
OUR SKILL IS A MATTER OF RECORD

Take the work out of going to work.



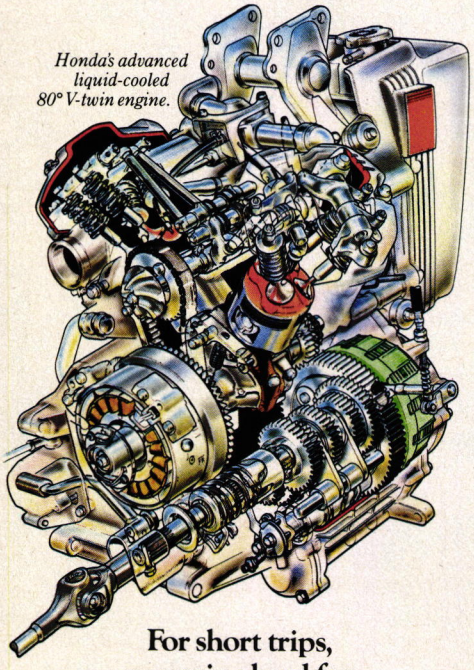
Hardly anybody likes going to work.

But maybe it's not the work that's the problem.

Maybe it's the going.

Maybe you've had enough of sitting in traffic listening to gas and oil prices go up. Maybe your commute has become more of a job than your job. Maybe your routine has become entirely too routine.

And maybe, just maybe, it's time you took a good, long, serious look at the 1981 Honda CX500 Deluxe.



Honda's advanced liquid-cooled 80° V-twin engine.

For short trips, an engine bred for long trips.

Trouble with most commuter bikes is that they're just that, commuter bikes. Designed to get you to work and back. Period.

Not the CX500 Deluxe.

The CX500 Deluxe was designed to go cross country as easily as across town.

Its engine is the advanced 80° V-twin which also powers Honda's Silver Wing™ touring bikes. Liquid-cooled for quiet operation, and more consistent operating temperatures. So even if you do get caught in an occasional traffic jam, you at least won't have to worry about overheating.

This exclusive Honda design features four valves per cylinder, rather than the usual two. For better, more efficient combustion. It is fired by Tri-Pulser™ capacitor discharge ignition which is virtually maintenance-free. And fed by two 34 mm constant velocity carburetors. With an accelerator pump for smooth throttle response.

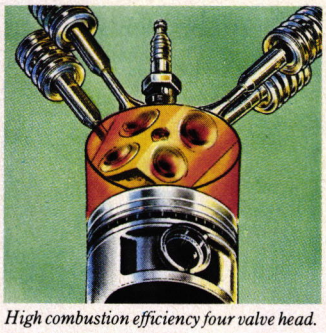
But one of the best things about the engine is how it's mounted. The crankshaft is parallel to the drive shaft.

So there is only one change in the direction of powerflow from the engine, back through the shaft drive to the rear wheel. And the fewer changes there are, the less power is lost.

What good is riding to work if you're too tired to work when you get there?

If you're going to ride a motorcycle every day, it had better be comfortable.

Which is exactly what the CX500 Deluxe was designed to be. So comfortable you may begin to wish your commute were longer so you could spend more time on the bike and less on the job.

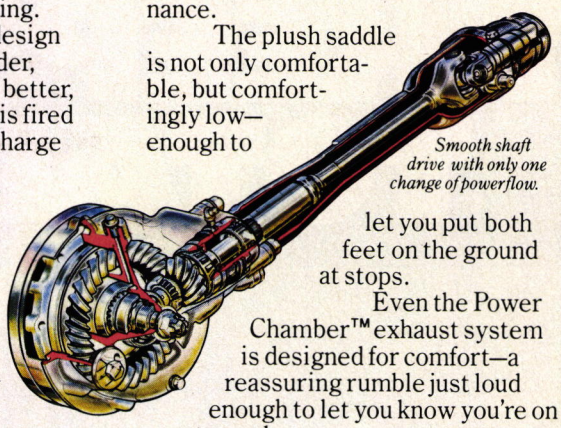


High combustion efficiency four valve head.

The front forks have two Syntallic™ bushings in each leg to cut friction and ensure smooth movement. And, to help custom tailor the ride to your preference, they're air-adjustable through one simple air equalizer fitting.

In the rear, Variable Hydraulic Damping shocks help take the bump out of the daily grind.

And in between, shaft drive for smoothness, quiet and low maintenance.



Smooth shaft drive with only one change of powerflow.

The plush saddle is not only comfortable, but comfortingly low—enough to let you put both feet on the ground at stops.

Even the Power Chamber™ exhaust system is designed for comfort—a reassuring rumble just loud enough to let you know you're on a motorcycle.

And the whole package cruises on tubeless tires mounted on Com-Star™ wheels which are as easy on your eye as the ride is on the rest of you.

What to do when you don't go to work.

If you think riding the CX500 Deluxe is a joy on the way to work, wait till you see what it can do with a weekend.

It can take two of you on a cruise around town or out of town. It can make places you've seen hundreds of times before seem brand new.

And if, like a lot of people, you choose to add some of the many available touring options, the CX500 Deluxe will take you as far as you have time to go.

In comfort. And style.

But since there are only two weekend days for every five work days, there is one alternative you may want to consider when you take delivery on your CX500 Deluxe.

Moving farther away from work.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice.
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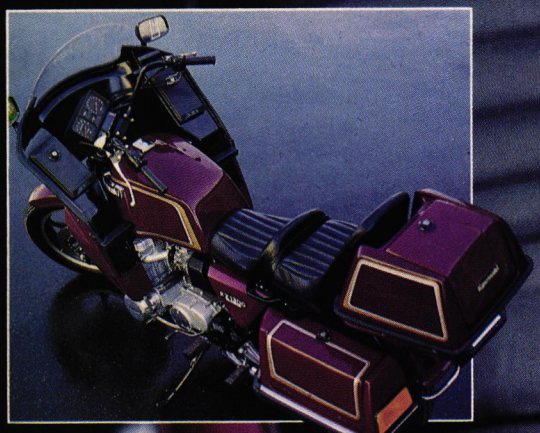

Off-road, street, touring – Bike Glaze by TR-3 will keep your motorcycle looking showroom new. A tough, mirror-like resin barrier protects your bike's finish from gasoline, brake fluid, and all other elements that soil, stain and corrode.

Specially formulated for both import and domestic motorcycles, TR-3 Bike Glaze cleans, polishes and protects it all – metal, chrome, fiberglass and plastic.

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TR3

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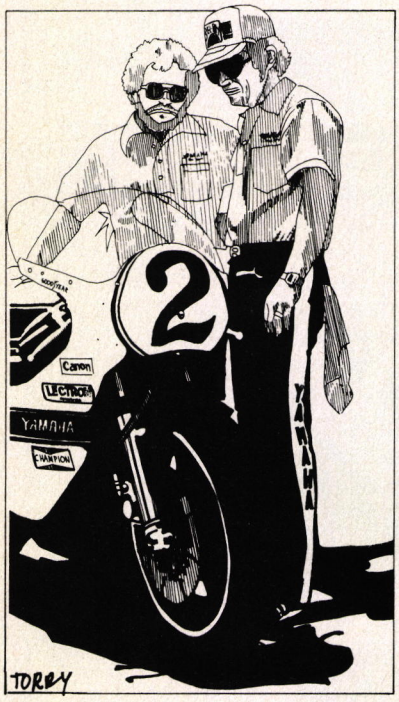
on the calendar after June 1. He will also vie for the Italian championship on the new Grand Prix SWM-Bimota.

• About Face? Dept.: Chevron, U.S.A. is back in the **news,** this time as the sponsor of an endurance roadracing team. Plans are to field a two-man effort at **six-hour** races in California, Oregon and Washington, plus other events as yet unnamed. An arm of the company, Chevron Land & Development, you'll recall, recently purchased Ontario Motor Speedway (*CG*, April '81) with the **intent** to raze the facility and build a housing complex. Makes one **wonder** if the left hand knows what the right one's doing.

• **British** moto-fans have **voted** their countryman, world sidecar champion Jock Taylor, as **Man Of The Year** in *Motor Cycle Weekly*'s annual poll. Randy Mamola finished second in the balloting, and Kenny Roberts was fifth behind Barry Sheene and Phil Haslam.

• Well Excuuuuuuuuse Me Dept.: South African **reaction** to a "Pit Bits" item (*CG*, December '80) on Anton Mang's dethroning of former 250cc **roadrace** champ Kork Ballington was strong. A sample: "Mang did not 'blow away' Kawasaki's two-time champion, Kork Ballington. **Whilst** he (Mang) won the championships, nobody is detracting from this. Ballington, in fact, missed three GP's due to a **serious** accident. In fact, Mang only beat Ballington once in the season." Duly noted. A further message from Kawasaki M/C South Africa places Kork as Number One 500cc roadracer for the company, with Gregg Hansford flying wing, whilst (forgive us) Anton Mang will **contest** 250cc and 350cc FIM events for the Big K. •



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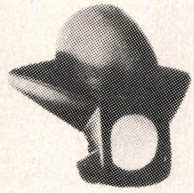

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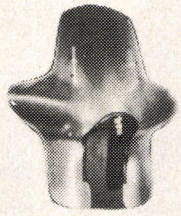

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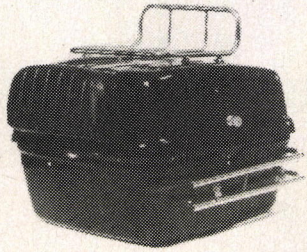

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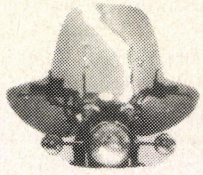

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Winners & Losers

Mark Blackwell

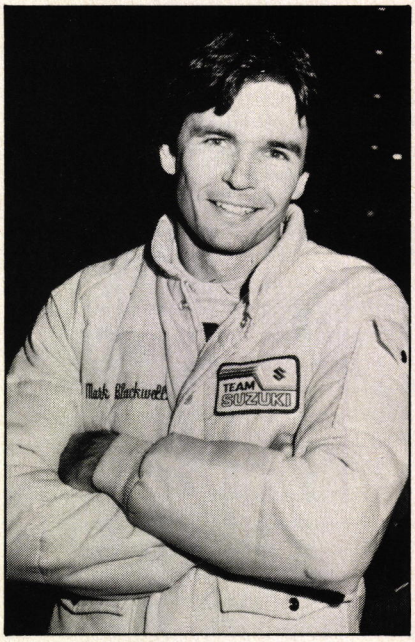
Change not for the sake of change.

• In 1971, at the age of 18, Mark Blackwell became the first-ever AMA 500cc National motocross champion, winning the title by one point over another California youngster, Brad Lackey. Since then, by anyone's measure, Blackwell has been at the leading edge of American motocross—as a rider, instructor, U.S. Suzuki team manager and now, just this month, as Motorcycle Product Manager for Husqvarna Motorcycle Company, Inc.

The list of Blackwell's contemporaries reads like a *Who's Who* of the sport: riders like Lackey, Weinert, DeSoto, Jones, Lamppu, Pomeroy and Priddy in the U.S.; and De Coster, Robert, Geboers, Mikkola, Weil and Smith in Europe, among others, competed against Blackwell during his peripatetic five-year professional career. Besides his national title, Blackwell also won the 500cc class in the Florida Series in 1972, and the 250cc class at the '72 Mint 400 (teamed with Malcolm Smith), before an eye injury—suffered at a GP in Europe, and never fully recovered from—two broken legs, and repeated torn knee and ankle ligaments forced him to hang up his leathers in 1975.

That year was a watershed for Blackwell. "Physically and psychologically," he says, "I perceived a need to leave racing. But I wanted to stay in motorcycling in some way, and my long-term interest was learning as much as I could about business management so I could develop a new career."

Blackwell had helped Rolf Tibblin with the Husqvarna motocross school at the Carlsbad Raceway from 1973–75, and when the program was discontinued U.S. Suzuki became interested in the facility and contacted Blackwell to run it. He re-designed the curriculum and acted as chief instructor



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Blackwell at Anaheim '81

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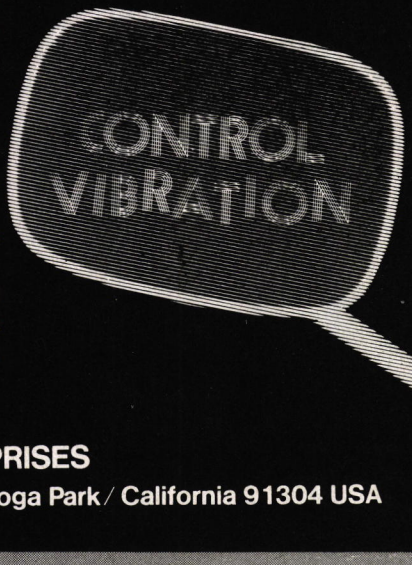

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for three years, but early in 1977 Suzuki's plans for Blackwell changed, and his career took another turn.

"The motocross team hadn't been doing too well, so they sent me to a few nationals and then made me team manager for the '77 Trans-AMA series," he says. "I didn't really want to become the mànager," Blackwell confesses, "but when they offered I figured if I refused it would mean the end of my career growth with Suzuki, and I wasn't ready for that yet. So I swallowed hard and took it."

Suzuki was glad he did. In three full years as race team manager, Blackwell brought in three Trans-AMA titles, national Championships in the 500cc (LaPorte), 250cc (Howerton) and 125cc (Barnett) classes, plus victories at two 250cc USGPs and one win each at the 500 and 125cc USGPs. The only title that has so far eluded a Blackwell-coached rider is the Supercross crown, and this year Suzuki has not one, not two, but *three* riders locked together in a tight points race for that championship.

"With Suzuki," he says, "I've accomplished almost more than I hoped to. I made a promise to myself my first year with them, to expand and learn as much as I could. But when I felt I'd done what I set out to do, I also promised that I'd look for a way to make another move, take the next career step."

That step, as it turned out, was a midseason change to Husqvarna's U.S. headquarters in San Diego, California, and a return to the company whose bikes he rode as a young pro. Only this time his responsibilities will range far afield from his racetrack expertise, though they will include overseeing the racing budget and activities.

"Essentially, I'll be involved with sales promotion, product needs and evaluation, and magazine relations," explains Blackwell. "I'll be responsible for the Husky motocross product—like Dick Burleson with enduro product and Bob Popiel with the off-road machinery. It's a chance for me to expand my knowledge of marketing, and continue my involvement with the motorcycle business. I'll also have the opportunity to input information to the factory in Sweden, and that's an important change for me."

Important enough to leave Suzuki in the lurch, as it were, just as the MX program he sweated three years for is beginning to bear fruit. It was a decision Blackwell didn't take lightly; it was planned and considered, and he is convinced it is happening at the right time for all concerned.

"I felt I wanted to leave the Suzuki team on an 'up' note," he says, "when I could make the smoothest transition. If I waited until the end of the season it wouldn't have worked out, the last few races might have been an anticlimax. Like if I had left at the

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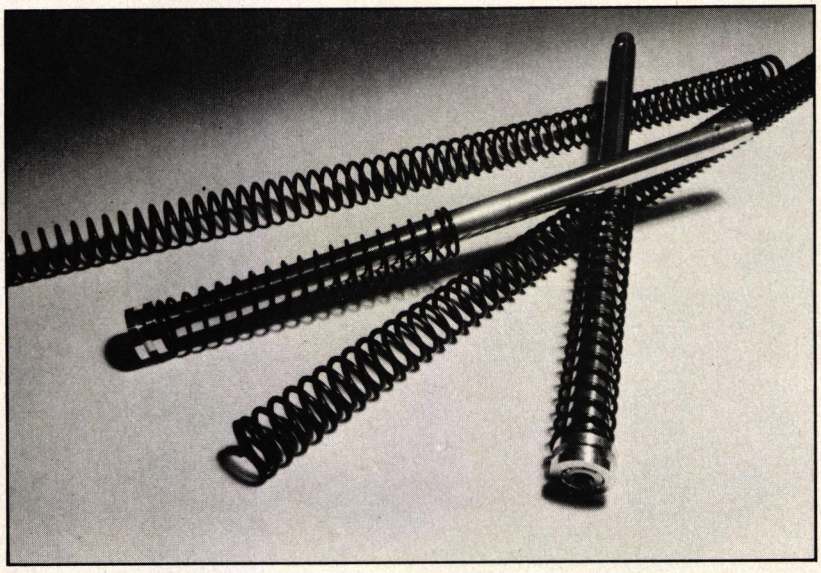

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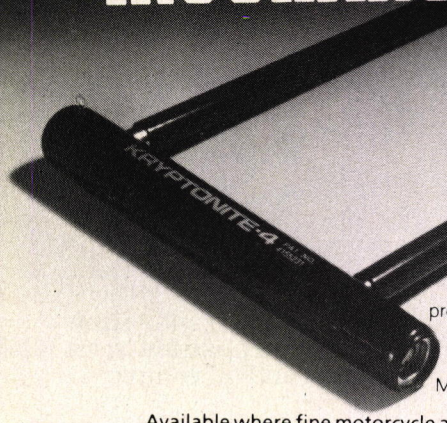

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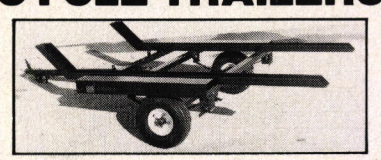

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end of last season, what would have happened? Kent (Howerton) would have gone to Honda, Darrell (Shultz) would probably still be crashing all over the place, Marty (Smith) wouldn't have regained his confidence—and I'm really sure he's going to be a winner again—and Mark (Barnett) would've lost the edge he built. I'm not trying to say I was responsible for all of that *not* happening, just that the team would have suffered if I had left then. Now it's different: Suzuki is doing really well, and I know I can leave and the riders will continue to do what they're doing—they have a real shot at winning everything this year.

"For me," he continues, "the more I stayed with racing the more I knew that's all people would think I was capable of. And that really scared me. There's more I think I can do in this business, so when it looked like there was no place for me in marketing at Suzuki, and when Husqvarna expressed an interest, it just came down to a question of timing."

Timing, it's said, is everything, and it's certainly difficult to minimize the importance of timing on Blackwell's life. He was discovered as a SoCal local in the late Sixties by Dick Miller, current editor of *Motocross Action*. He was influenced early on by Edison Dye, the famous—some say infamous—motocross promoter.

"Edison told me," says Blackwell, "in 1970 that the six-race Inter-AM series would blossom into a weekly circus with all of us traveling all over the U.S., racing in front of big crowds. I didn't believe him then, but you know what?—he was right. I think without him, and Mike Goodwin (who promoted the first stadium race), none of us would be where we are today."

Blackwell also credits the AMA for the continued growth of motocross in America. "I remember 10 years ago," he says, "when we used to go out real early in the morning and string flags around the bushes in Beaumont, then race our brains out that afternoon—just for a trophy. Since then. . .well, look at the salaries, the crowds, the venues—the AMA, I really believe, has been a force in bringing us where we are.

"I also think," he says, "that motocross has brought new people into the sport. And by that I mean the sport of motorcycling. Today's athletes present themselves well, especially on TV, and they're helping change the image. Motocross doesn't just sell dirt bikes, I really believe it helps the whole spectrum of the sport."

Blackwell hopes that the manufacturers will stay involved in motocross, at least in the immediate future. But he does not discount the criers of MX's doom, and foresees changes the sport must undertake in the event of a factory fallout.

"If traditional companies get less involved," he says, "we'll just have to attract outside sponsors in order to survive. Like

Continued

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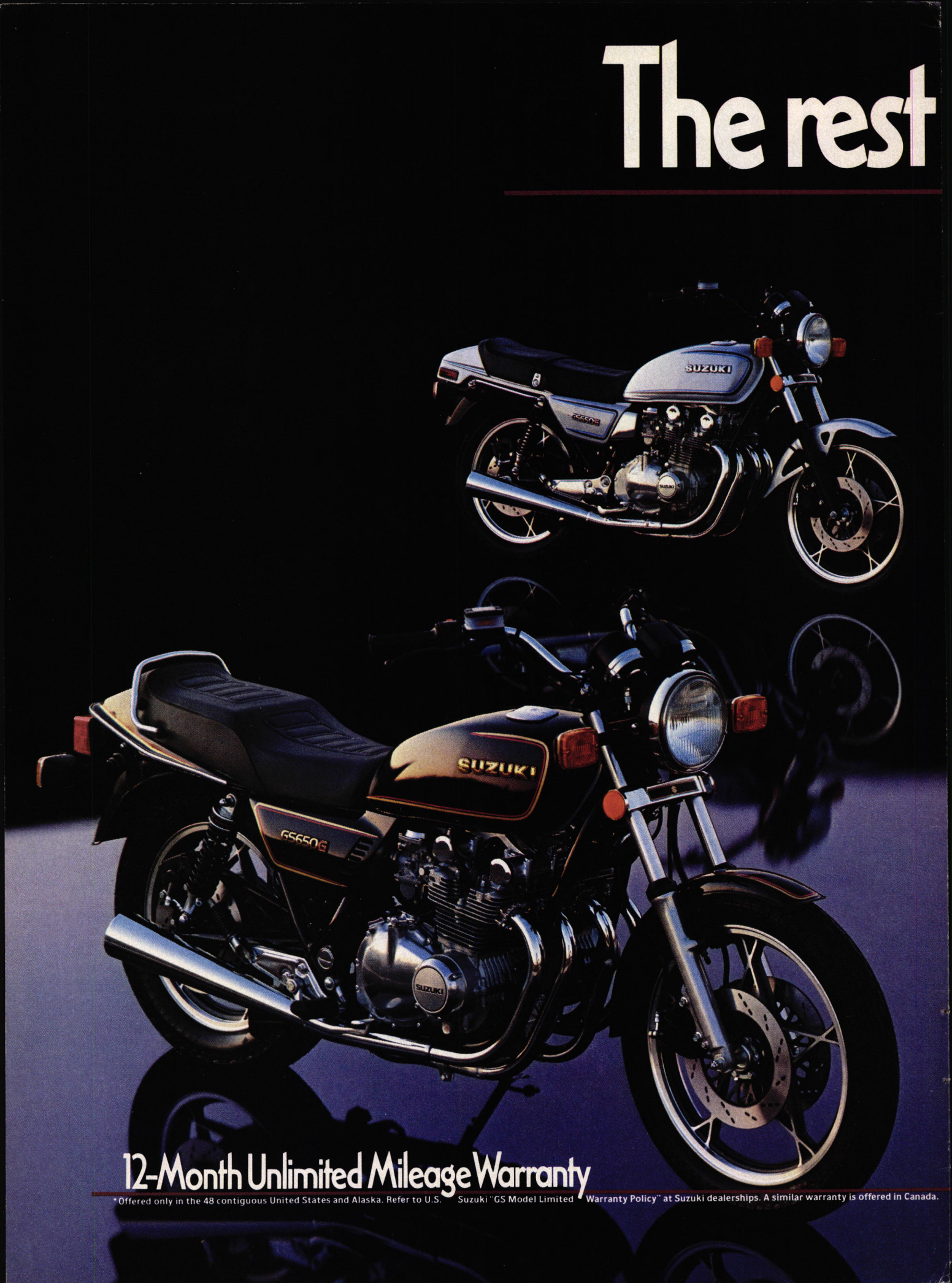

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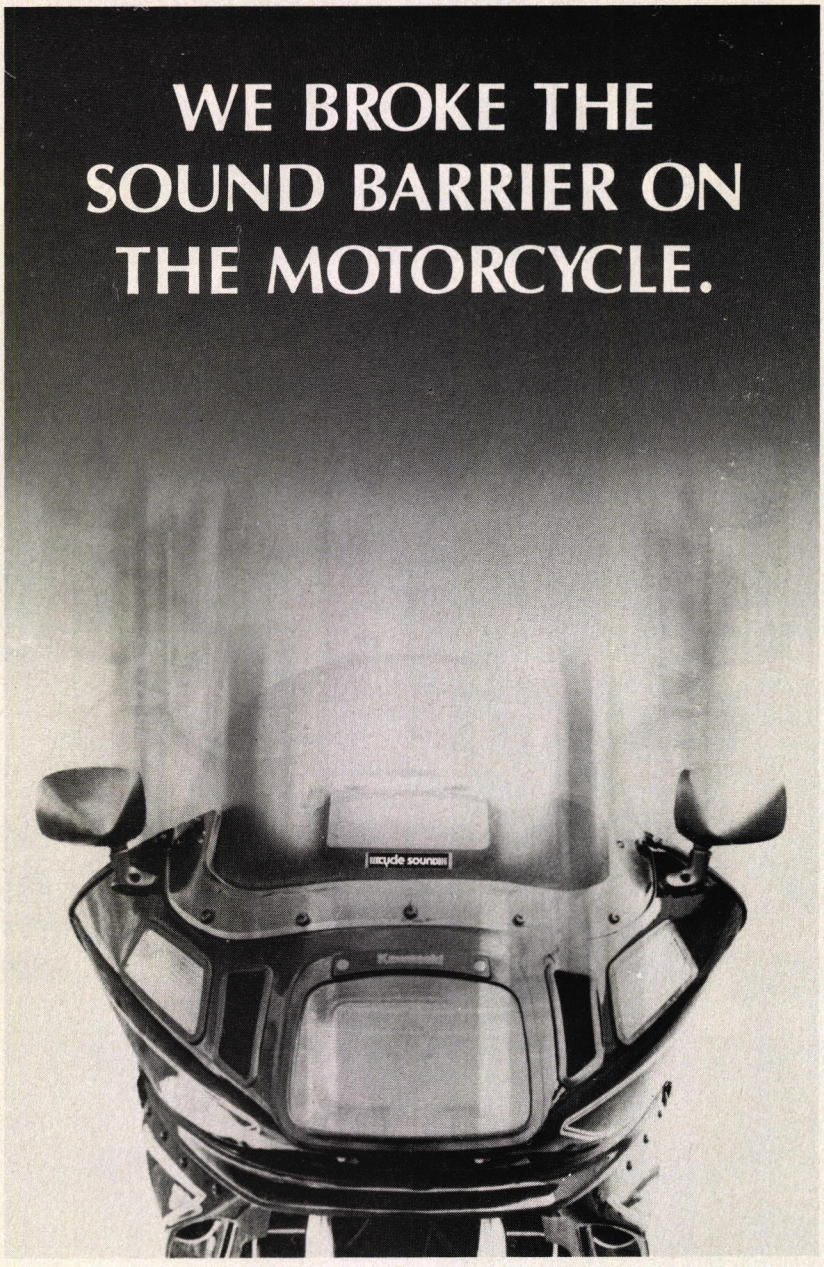

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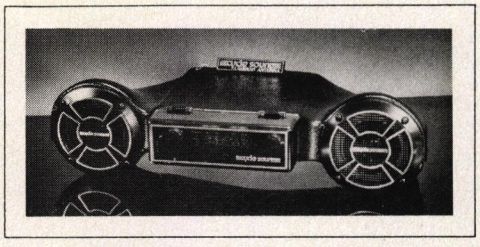

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"But for right now," he continues, "a full stadium can make all the difference. At Anaheim, Seattle and Atlanta this year we played to packed houses, so I really am not convinced that Supercross is dead. I think the manufacturers have to do more with their wins, though, more than just advertising in *Cycle News*. The message has to be transported to the general public for motocross—and motorcycling—to benefit."

At 27, Blackwell has seen a lot of changes already in the sport, not the least of which are the astronomical salaries earned by today's moto-stars, dollar figures unheard of when he was a SoCal sensation.

"Do I miss the Big Bucks?," he says, "sure I do, but not in a bad way. And even had the money been around I wish I would have known then what I know now. I was so young, had no guidance—I might just have Turbo Carrera-and-surfed it all away, like some kids today have the temptation to do.

De Coster was a Blackwell mentor

Old pros never die, they change teams.

"No," he says, "money's not the measure. I would have liked it, sure, but I know so much more now because of the way it was for me. I've learned so much, met so many people, been all over the United States, seen the world—all of my experiences are the reason why I'm in my present position. I wouldn't change it, or go back.

"You know what, though?," Blackwell concludes, "I've sat in contract negotiations with Suzuki riders—guys who are racing right now—and they say 'So you used to ride?' Like it was ancient history or something. And I tell them: 'Yeah—10 years too early.' "

—Jeff Burtt

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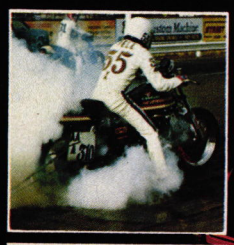

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ALPHABET

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If you think a motorcycle is the only way to travel, we think you should travel down to your Yamaha dealer and take a look at a Venturer.

What you see is what you get: a full wardrobe of made-to-measure touring accessories on a bike with bullet-proof dependability and boasting the kind of exhilarating performance that makes getting there most of the fun.

You even get two ways to go: the Venturer 1100 and the Venturer 850.

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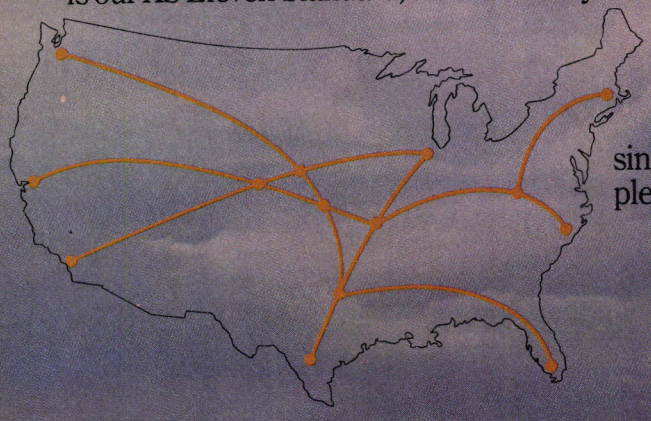
The backbone of the Venturer 1100 is our XS Eleven Standard, a bike whose touring prowess has been proven by thousands of riders and millions of miles.

It's powerful 1101cc DOHC four-cylinder breathing through four CV Mikuni carburetors will lope along all day with surprising fuel efficiency. Yet it delivers the mid-range punch to rocket around a lumbering tractor-trailer with astonishing quickness.

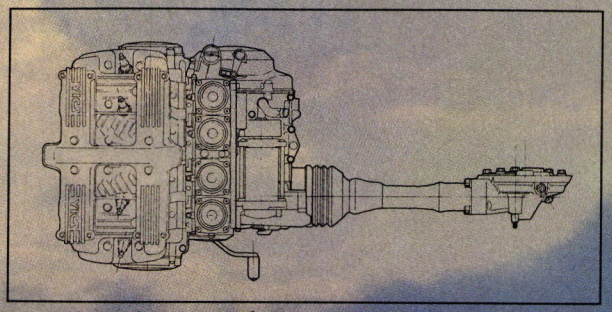
An oil cooler provides added trip insurance. While a fully-adjustable suspension lets you fine tune your ride to any load or road condition. A new, larger capacity fuel tank means lots of miles between fill-ups. And a pair of discs in front and single disc in the rear deliver plenty of stopping power.

The Venturer 850 is as



Rear view mirror(s) standard equipment. Always wear a helmet and eye protection.

quick and as torquey as a four. Only it's a triple. So it's narrow and nimble as only a three can be.



An oil cooler helps insure trouble-free dependability. And its Transistor Controlled Ignition contributes maintenance-free efficiency.

Both Venturers come with strong, one-piece cast alloy wheels, cool-running tubeless tires, a quartz halogen headlight, and twin bulbs front and rear for added insurance.

Both carry special heavy-duty rear springs and both are blessed with clean, quiet, dependable direct-coupling shaft drive.

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We fitted the Venturers with frame-mounted full fairing complete with lowers for optimum weather protection. We added quality chrome engine case guards to surround your investment with heavy-wall steel.

A set of color-coordinated saddle-bags provide ample room to stow your gear. And for additional carrying capacity, there's a chrome luggage rack.

The handsome diamond-stitched saddles on the Venturers are generously padded for all-day comfort. And to help keep your Venturer from venturing off, we've built-in a wheel locking chain that stores neatly out of sight when not in use.

Venturer 850

Venturer 1100

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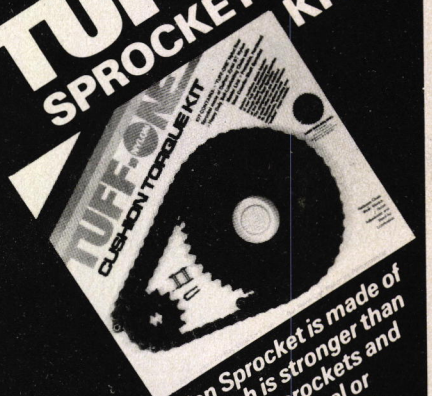

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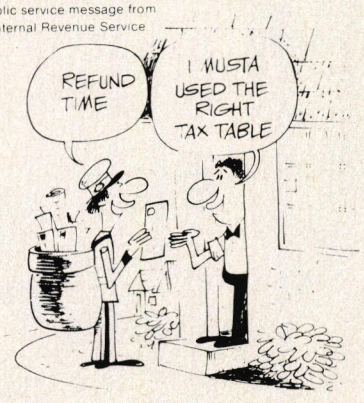

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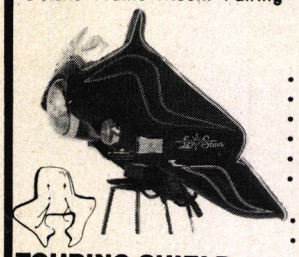

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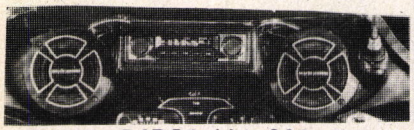

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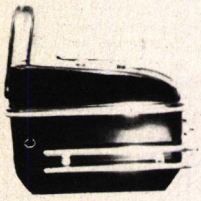

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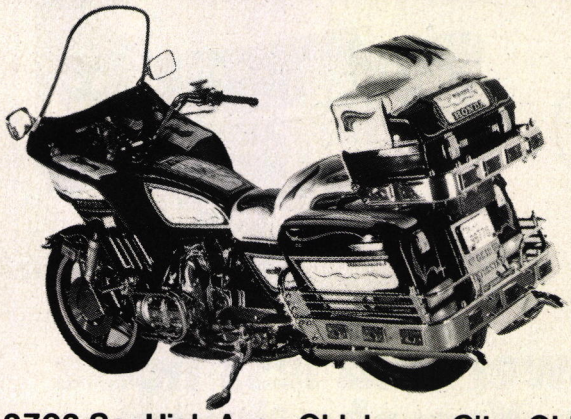

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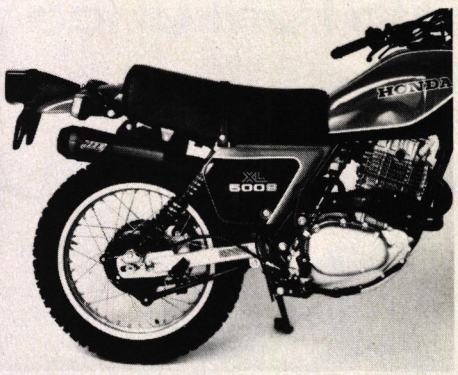

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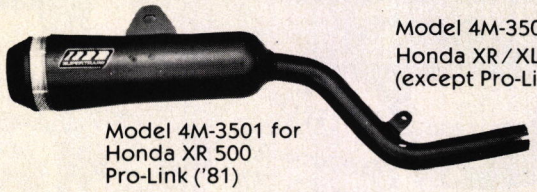

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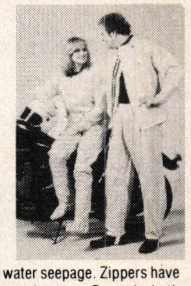

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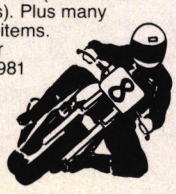

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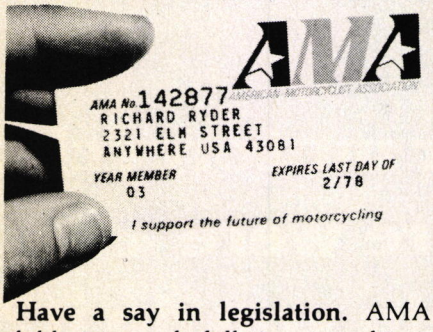

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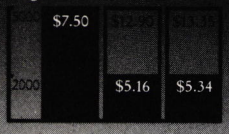

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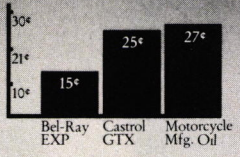

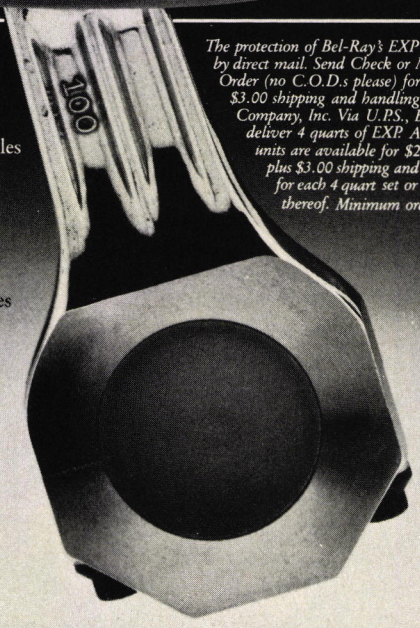

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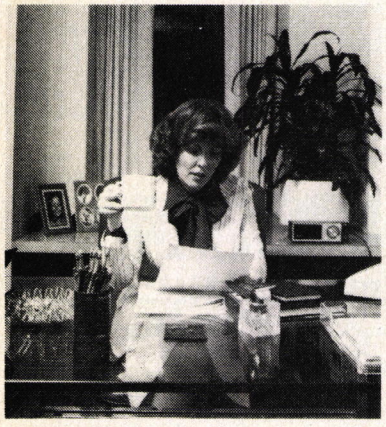

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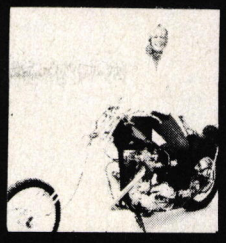

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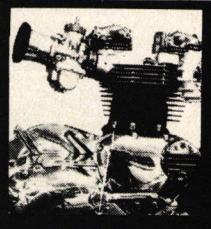

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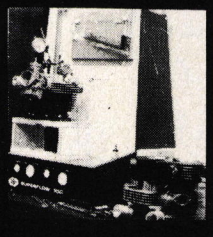

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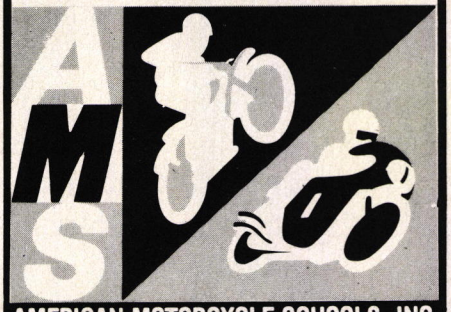

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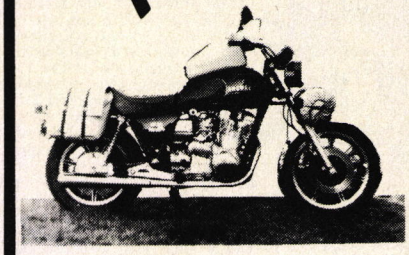

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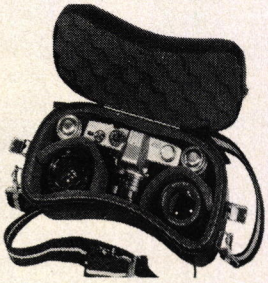

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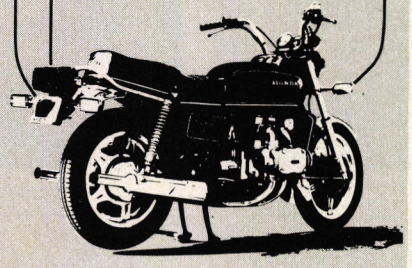

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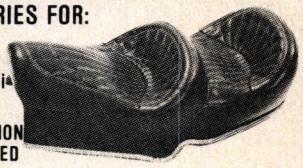

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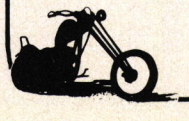

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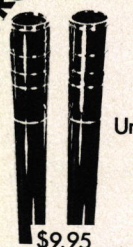

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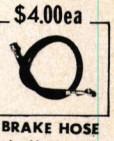

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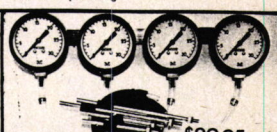

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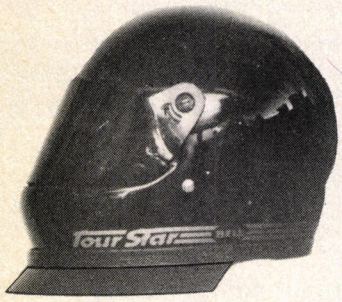

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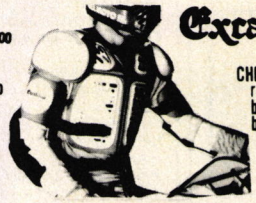

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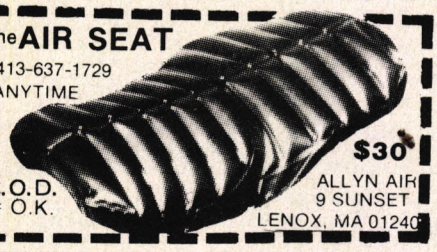
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